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## *The Three Fates.<sup>1</sup>*

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'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &c.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

'WE had better say nothing about it for the present,' said Totty to George on the following day. 'It will only cause complications, and it will be much easier when we are all in town.'

The two were seated together in the little morning-room, discussing the future and telling over what had happened. George was in a frame of mind which he did not recognise, and he seemed laughable in his own eyes, though he was far from being unhappy. His surprise at the turn events had taken had not yet worn off, and he could not help being amused at himself for having known his own mind so little. At the same time he was grateful to Totty for the part she had played, and was ready to yield to all her wishes in the matter. With regard to announcing the engagement, she told him that it was quite unnecessary to do so yet, and that, among other reasons, it would be better in the eyes of the world to publish the social banns after Sherrington had returned from abroad. Moreover, if the engagement were made known at once, it would be in accordance with custom that George should leave the house and find a lodging in the nearest town.

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'I cannot tell why, I am sure,' said Mrs. Trimm, 'but it is always done, and I should be so sorry if you had to leave us just now.'

'It would not be pleasant,' George answered, thoughtfully. He had wished to inform Constance as soon as possible.

So the matter was decided, somewhat to his dissatisfaction in one respect, but quite in accordance with his inclinations in all others. And it was thereupon further agreed that as soon as the weather permitted they would all return to town and make active preparations for the wedding. Totty could see no reason whatever why the day should not be fixed early in November. She declared emphatically that she hated long engagements, and that in this case especially there could be no object in putting off the marriage. She assured Mamie that by using a little energy everything could be made ready in plenty of time, and she promised that there should be no hitch in the proceedings.

The week that followed the events last narrated slipped pleasantly and quickly away. As George had said at once, he was a very happy man; that is to say, he believed himself to be so, because the position in which he found himself was new, agreeable, and highly flattering to his vanity. He could not but believe that he was taken into the family of his cousin solely on his own merits. Being in total ignorance of the fortune between which and himself the only barrier was the enfeebled health of an invalid old man, he very naturally attributed Totty's anxiety to see him marry her daughter to the causes she enumerated. He was still modest enough to feel that he was being very much overrated, and to fear lest he might some day prove a disappointment to his future wife and her family; for the part of the desirable young man was new to him, and he did not know how he should acquit himself in the performance of it. But the delicious belief that he was loved for himself, as he was, gave energy to his good resolutions and maintained at a genial warmth the feelings he entertained for her who loved him.

He must not be judged too harshly. In offering to marry Mamie, he had felt that he was doing his duty as an honourable man, and he assured himself as well as he could that he was able to promise the most sincere affection and unchanging fidelity in return for her passionate love. It was in one respect a sacrifice, for it meant that he must act in contradiction to the convictions of his whole life. He had always believed in love, and he had frequently preached that true and mutual passion

was the only foundation for lasting happiness in marriage. At the moment of acceding to Mrs. Trimm's very clearly expressed proposal, George had felt that Mamie would be to him hereafter what she had always been hitherto, neither more nor less. He did not wish to marry her, and if he agreed to do so, it was because he was assured that her happiness depended upon it, and that he had made himself responsible for her happiness by his conduct towards her. Being once persuaded of this, and assured that he alone had done the mischief, he was chivalrous enough to have married the girl though she had been ugly, ill-educated, and poor, instead of being rich, refined, and full of charm, and to all outward appearances he would have married her with as good a grace, and would have behaved towards her afterwards with as much consideration as though he had loved her. But the fact that Mamie possessed so many real and undeniably graces and advantages had made the sacrifice seem singularly easy, and the twenty-four hours that succeeded the moment of forming the resolution had sufficed to destroy the idea of sacrifice altogether. Hitherto George had fought against the belief that he was loved, and had done his best to laugh at it. Now he was at liberty to accept that belief, and to make it one of the chief pleasures of his thoughts. It flattered his heart, as Totty's professed appreciation of his fine qualities flattered his intelligence. In noble natures flattery produces a strong desire to acquit the debt which seems to be created by the acceptance of undue praise. Men of such temper do not like to receive and give nothing in return, nor can they bear to be thought braver, more generous, or more gifted than they are. Possessing that high form of self-esteem which is honourable pride, they feel all the necessity of being in their own eyes worthy of the estimation they enjoy in the opinion of other men. The hatred of all false positions is strong in them, and they are not quick to believe that they are justly valued by the world.

George found it easy to imagine that he loved the young girl, when he had once admitted the fact that she loved him. It was indeed the pleasantest deception he had ever submitted to, or encouraged himself in accepting. He hid from himself the fact that his heart had never been satisfied, considering that it was better to take the realities of a brilliant future than to waste time and sentiment in dreaming of illusions. There was nothing to be gained by weighing the undeveloped capabilities of his affections against the manifestations of them which had hitherto been thrust

upon his notice. He was doing what he believed to be best for everyone as well as for himself, and no good could come of a hypercriticism of his sensibilities. Mamie was supremely happy, and it was pleasant to feel that he was at once the cause and the central figure in her happiness. The course of true love should run pleasantly for her at least, and its course should not be hard for him to follow.

A fortnight passed before he thought of fulfilling his promise and visiting Grace. The attraction was not great, but he felt a certain curiosity to know how she was recovering from the shock she had sustained. Once more he crossed the river and walked up the long avenue to the old house. As he was passing through the garden he unexpectedly came upon Constance, who was wandering idly through the deserted walks.

'It is so long since we have met,' she exclaimed, with an intonation of gladness, as she put out her hand.

'Yes,' George answered. 'I came once to see your sister, but you were not with her. How is she?'

'She is well—as well as any one could expect. I have tried to persuade her to go away, but she will not, though I am sure it is bad for her to stay here.'

'But you cannot stay for ever. It is already autumn—it will soon be winter.'

'I cannot tell,' Constance answered indifferently enough. 'I confess that I care very little whether we pass the winter here or in town, provided Grace is contented.'

'You ought to consider yourself to some extent. You look tired, and you must weary of all this sadness and dismal solitude. It stands to reason that you should need a change.'

'No change would make any difference to me,' said Constance, walking slowly along the path and swinging her parasol slowly from side to side.

'Do you mean that you are ill?' George asked.

'No, indeed. I am never really ill. But it is a waste of breath to talk of such things. Come into the house. Grace will be so glad to see you; she has been anticipating your visit for a long time.'

'Presently,' said George. 'The afternoons are still long, and it is pleasant here in the garden.'

'Do you want to talk to me?' asked the young girl, with the slightest intonation of irony.

'I wish to tell you something—something that will surprise you.'

'I am not easily surprised. Is it about yourself?'

'Yes—it is not announced yet, but I want you to know it. You will tell no one, of course. I am going to be married.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed Constance, with a slight start.

'Yes. I am sure you will be glad to hear it. I am engaged to be married to my cousin, Mamie Trimm.'

Constance was looking so ill already, that it could not be said that she turned pale at the announcement. She walked quietly on, gazing steadily before her at some distant object.

'It is rather sudden, I suppose,' said George in a tone that sounded unpleasantly apologetic in his own ears.

'Rather,' Constance answered with an effort. 'I confess that I am astonished. You have my best congratulations.'

She paused, and reflected that her words were very cold. She felt an odd chill in herself as well as in her language, and tried to shake it off.

'If you are happy, I am very glad,' she said. 'It was not what I expected, but I am very glad.'

'Thanks. But, Constance, what did you expect—something very different? Why?'

'Nothing—nothing—it is very natural, of course. When are you to be married?' All the coldness had returned to her voice as she put the question.

'I believe it is to be in November. It will certainly be before Christmas. Mr. Trimm is expected to-morrow or the next day. He cabled his consent.'

'Yes? Well, I am glad it has all gone so smoothly. I feel cold—is it not chilly here? Let us go in and find Grace.'

She began to walk more quickly, and in a few moments they reached the house, not having exchanged any further words. As they entered the door she stopped and turned to her companion.

'Grace is in the drawing-room,' she said. 'She wants to see you alone—so, good-bye. I hope with all my heart that you will be happy—my dear friend. Good-bye.'

She turned and left him standing in the great hall. He watched her retreating figure as she entered the staircase which led away to the right. He had expected something different in her reception of the news, and did not know whether to feel disappointed or not. She had received the announcement with very great calmness, so far as he could judge. That at least was a satisfaction. He did not wish to have his equanimity disturbed at present by any great exhibition of feeling on the

part of any one but himself. As he opened the door before him he wondered whether Constance were really glad or sorry to learn that he was to be married.

Grace rose and came towards him. He could not help thinking that she looked like a beautiful figure of fate as she stood in the middle of the room and held out her hand to take his. She seemed taller and more imposing since her husband's death, and there was something interesting in her face which had not been there in old times, a look of greater strength, combined with a profound sadness, which would have attracted the attention of any student of humanity.

'I am very glad to see you—it is so good of you to come,' she said.

'I could not do less, since I had promised—even apart from the pleasure it gives me to see you. I met your sister in the garden. She told me she hoped that you would be induced to go away for a time.'

Grace shook her head.

'Why should I go away?' she asked. 'I am less unhappy here than I should be anywhere else. There is nothing to take me to any other place. Why not stay here?'

'It would be better for you both. Your sister is not looking well. Indeed, I was shocked by the change in her.'

'Really? Poor child! It is not gay for her. I am very poor company. You thought she was changed, then?'

'Very much,' George answered, thoughtfully.

'And it is a long time since you have seen her. Poor Constance! It will end in my going away for her sake rather than my own. I wonder what would be best for her, after all.'

'A journey—a change of some sort,' George suggested. He found it very hard to talk with the heartbroken young widow, though he could not help admiring her, and wondering how long it would be before she took another husband.

'No,' Grace answered. 'That is not all. She is unsettled, uncertain in all she does. If she goes on in this way she will turn into one of those morbid, introspective women who do nothing but imagine that they have committed great sins and are never satisfied with their own repentance.'

'She is too sensible for that—'

'No, she is not sensible, where her conscience is concerned. I wish someone would come and take her out of herself—someone strong, enthusiastic, who would shake her mind and heart free of all this nonsense.'

'In other words,' said George with a smile, 'you wish that your sister would marry.'

'Yes, if she would marry the right man—a man like you.'

'Like me!' George exclaimed in great surprise.

'Yes—since I have said it. I did not mean to tell you so. I wish she would marry you, after all. You will say that I am capricious and you will laugh at the way in which I have changed my mind. I admit it. I made a mistake. I misjudged you. If it were all to be lived over again, instead of paying no attention to what happened, as I did during the last year, I would make her marry you. It would have been much better. I made a great mistake in letting her alone.'

'I had never expected to hear you say that,' said George, looking into her brown eyes and trying to read her thoughts.

'I am not given to talking about myself, as you may have noticed, but I once told you that my only virtue was honesty. What I think, I say, if there is any need of saying anything. I told you that I never hated you, and it is quite true. I disliked you, and I did not want you for a brother-in-law. In the old days, more than a year ago, Constance and I used to quarrel about you. She admired everything you did, and I saw no reason to do so. That was before you published your first book, when you used to write so many articles in the magazines. She thought them all perfection, and I thought some of them were trash and said so. I daresay you think it is not very complimentary of me to tell you what I think and thought. Perhaps it is not. There is no reason why I should make compliments after what I have said. You have written much that I have liked since, and you have made a name for yourself. My judgment may be worthless, but those who can judge have told me that some things you have done will live. But that is not the reason why I have changed my mind about you. If you were still writing those absurd little notices in the papers I should think just as well of you, yourself, as I do now. You are not what I thought you were—a clever, rather weak, vain creature without the strength of being enthusiastic, nor the courage to be cynical. That is exactly what I thought. You will forgive me if I tell you so frankly, will you not? I found out that you are strong, brave and honourable. I do not expect that you will ever think again of marrying my sister, but if you do I shall be glad, and if you do not, I shall always be sorry that I did not use all my influence in making Constance accept you. That is a long speech, but every word of it is true, and I am glad I have told you just what I think.'

George was silent for some seconds. There were assuredly many people in the world from whom he would have resented such an exposition of opinion in regard to himself. But Grace was not one of these. He respected her judgment in a way he could not explain, and he felt that all she had said confirmed his own ideas about her character.

'I am glad you have told me,' he answered at length. 'I have changed my mind about you, too. I used to feel that you were the opposing barrier between your sister and me, and that but for you we should have been happily married long ago. I hated you accordingly, with a fine unreasoning hatred. You were very frank with me when you came to give me her decision. I believed you at the moment, but when I was out of the house I began to think that you had arranged the whole thing between you, and that you were the moving power. It was natural enough, but my common-sense told me that I was wrong within a month of the time. I have liked your frankness, in my heart, all along. It has been the best thing in the whole business.'

'You and I understand each other,' said Grace, leaning back in her seat and watching his dark face from beneath her heavy, drooping lids. 'It is strange. I never thought we should, and until lately I never thought it would be pleasant if we did.'

George was struck by the familiarity of her tone. She had always been the person of all others who had treated him with the most distant civility, and whose phrases in speaking with him had been the coldest and the most carefully chosen. He had formerly wondered how her voice would sound if she were suddenly to say something friendly.

'You are very good,' he answered presently. 'With regard to the rest—to what you have said about your sister. I have done my best to put the past out of my mind, and I have succeeded. When I met her in the garden just now, I told her what has happened in my life. I am to be married very soon. I did not mean to tell any one but Miss Fearing until it was announced publicly, but I cannot help telling you, after what you have said. I am going to marry my cousin in two months.'

Grace did not change her position nor open her eyes any wider. She had expected to hear the news before long.

'Yes,' she said, 'I thought that would happen. I am very glad to hear it. Mamie is thorough, and will suit you much better than Constance ever could. I wish that Constance was

half as natural and enthusiastic and sensible. She has so much, but she has not that.'

'No enthusiasm?' asked George, remembering how he had lived upon her appreciation of his work.

'No. She has changed very much since you used to see her every day. You had a good influence over her, you stirred her mind, though you did not succeed in stirring her heart enough. She cares for nothing now, she never talks, never reads, never does anything but write long letters to Dr. Drinkwater about her poor people—or her soul, I do not quite know which. No, you need not look grave, I am not abusing her. Poor child, I wish I could do anything to make her forget that same soul of hers, and those eternal hospitals and charities! Your energy did her good. It roused her and made her think. She has a heart somewhere, I suppose, and she has plenty of head, but she smothers them both with her soul.'

'She will get over that,' said George. 'She will outgrow it. It is only a phase.'

'She will never get over it until she is married,' Grace answered in a tone of conviction.

'It is very strange. You talk now as if you were her mother instead of being her younger sister.'

'Her younger sister!' Grace exclaimed with a sigh. 'I am a hundred years older than Constance. Older in everything, in knowing the meaning of the two great words—happiness and suffering.'

'Indeed, you may say that,' George answered in a low voice.

'I sometimes think that they are the two only words that have any meaning left for me, or that should mean anything to the rest of the world.'

The settled look of pain deepened upon her face as she spoke, not distorting or changing the pure outlines, but lending them something solemn and noble that was almost grand. George looked at her with a sort of awe, and the great question of the meaning of all life and death rose before him, as he remembered her husband's death-grip upon his arm, and the moment when he himself had breathed in the cool water and given up the struggle. He had opened his eyes again to this world to see all that was to result of pain and suffering from the death of the other, whose sight had gone out for ever. They had been together in the depths. The one had been drowned, and had taken with him the happiness of the woman he had

loved. The other, he himself, had been saved, and another woman's life had been filled with sunshine. Why the one, rather than the other? He, who had always faced life as he had found it, and fought with whatever opposed him, asked himself whether there were any meaning in it all. Why should those two great things, happiness and suffering, be so unevenly distributed? Was poor John Bond a loss to humanity in the aggregate? Not a serious one. Did he, George Wood, care whether John Bond were alive or dead, beyond the decent regret he felt, or ought to feel? No, assuredly not. Would Constance have cared, if he had not chanced to be her sister's husband? did Totty care, did Mamie care? No. They were all shocked, which is to say that their nerves, including his own, had been painfully agitated. And yet this man, John Bond, for whom nobody cared, but whom every one respected, had left behind him in one heart a grief that was almost awe-inspiring, a sorrow that sought no expression, and despised words, that painted its own image on the woman's face and spread its own solemn atmosphere about her. A keen, cool, sharp-witted young lawyer, by the simple act of departing this world, had converted a pretty and very sensible young woman into a tragic muse, had lent her grandeur of mien, had rendered her imposing, had given her a dignity that momentarily placed her higher than other women in the scale of womanhood. Which was the real self—the self that was gone, or the one that remained? Had a great sorrow given the woman a fictitious importance, or had it revealed something noble in her which no one had known before? Whichever were true, Grace was no longer the Grace Fearing of old, and George felt a strange admiration for her growing up within him.

'You are right, I think,' he said after a long pause. 'Happiness and suffering are the only words that have or ought to have any meaning. The rest—it is all a matter of opinion, of taste, of fashion, of anything you please excepting the heart.'

'Constance will tell you that right and wrong are the two important words,' said Grace. 'And she will tell you that real happiness consists in being able to distinguish between the two, and that the only suffering lies in confounding the wrong with the right.'

'Does religion mean that we are to feel nothing?' George asked.

'That is what the religion of people who have never felt anything seems to mean. Pay no attention to your sorrows and dis-

trust all your joys, because they are of no importance compared with the welfare of your soul. It matters not who lives or who dies, who is married, or who is betrayed, provided you take care of your soul, of your miserable, worthless, selfish little soul and bring it safe to heaven!'

'That must be an odd sort of religion,' said George.

'It is the religion of those who cannot feel. It is good enough for them. I do not know why I am talking in this way, except that it is a relief to be able to talk to someone who understands. When are you to be married?'

'I hope it may be in November.'

'By-the-by, what will Mr. Craik think of the marriage? He ought to do something for Mamie, I suppose.'

'Mr. Craik is my own familiar enemy,' said George. 'I never take into consideration what he is likely to do or to leave undone. He will do what seems right in his own eyes, and that will very probably seem wrong in the eyes of others.'

'Mrs. Trimm doubtless knows best what can be done with him. What did Constance say when you told her of your engagement?'

'Very little. What she will say to you, I have no doubt. That she hopes I shall be happy, and is very glad to hear of the marriage.'

'I wonder whether she cares,' said Grace thoughtfully.

George thought it would be more discreet to say nothing than to give his own opinion in the matter.

'No one can tell,' Grace continued. 'Least of all, herself. I have once or twice thought that she regretted you and wished you would propose again. And then, at other times, I have felt sure that she was only bored—bored to death with me, with her surroundings, with Dr. Drinkwater, the poor, and her soul. Poor child, I hope she will marry soon!'

'I hope so,' said George as he rose to leave. 'Will you be kind enough not to say anything about the engagement until it is announced? That will be in a fortnight or so.'

'Certainly. Come and see me when it is out, unless you will come sooner. It is so good of you. Good-bye.'

He left the house and walked down the garden in the direction of the trees, thinking very much more of Grace and of her conversation than of Constance. Apart from her appearance, which had a novel interest for him, and which excited his sympathy, he hardly knew whether he had been attracted or repelled by her

uncommon frankness of speech. There was something in it which he did not recognise as having belonged to her before in the same degree—something more like masculine bluntness than feminine honesty. It seemed as though she had caught and kept something of her dead husband's manner. He wondered whether she spoke as she did in order to remind herself of him by using words that had been familiar in his mouth. He was engaged in these reflections when he was surprised to meet Constance face to face as he turned a corner in the path.

'I thought you were indoors,' he said, glancing at her face as though expecting to see some signs of recent distress there.

But if Constance had shed tears she had successfully effaced all traces of them, and her features were calm and composed. The truth of the matter was that she feared lest she had betrayed too much feeling in the interview in the garden, and now, to do away with any mistaken impression in George's mind, she had resolved to show herself to him again.

'Are you in your boat?' she asked. 'I thought that as it was rather chilly, and if you did not mind, I would ask you to row me out for ten minutes in the sun. Do you mind very much?'

'I shall be delighted,' said George, wondering what new development of circumstances had announced itself in her sudden desire for boating.

A few minutes later she was seated in the stern and he was rowing her leisurely up-stream. To his surprise, she talked easily, touching upon all sorts of subjects, and asking him questions about his book in her old familiar way, but never referring in any way to the past, nor to his engagement, until at her own request he had brought her back to the landing. She insisted upon his letting her walk to the house alone.

'Good-bye,' she said, 'and so many thanks. I am quite warm now; and I am very, very glad about the engagement and grateful to you for telling me. I hope you will ask me to the wedding!'

'Of course,' George answered imperturbably; and then, as he pulled out into the stream, he watched her slight figure as she followed the winding path that led up from the landing to the level of the grounds above. When she had reached the top, she waved her hand to him and smiled.

'I would not have him think that I cared—not for the whole world!' she was saying to herself as she made the friendly signal and turned away,

## CHAPTER XXIV.

SHERRINGTON TRIMM arrived on the following afternoon, rosier and fresher than ever, and considerably reduced in weight. After the first general and affectionate greeting he proceeded to interview each member of the family in private, as though he were getting up evidence for a case. It was characteristic of him that he spoke to Mamie first. The most important point in his estimation was to ascertain whether the girl were really in love, or whether she had only contracted a passing attachment for George Wood. Knowing all that he did, and all that he supposed was unknown to his wife, he could not but regard the match with complacency, so far as worldly advantages were concerned. But if he had been once assured that his daughter's happiness was really at stake, he would have given her as readily to George, the comparatively impecunious author, as to Mr. Winton Wood, the future millionaire.

'Now, Mamie,' he said, linking his arm in hers and leading her into the garden, 'now, Mamie, tell us all about it.'

Mamie blushed faintly and gave her father a shy glance, and then looked down.

'There is not much to tell,' she answered. 'I love him, and I am very happy. Is not that enough?'

'You are quite sure of yourself, eh?' Mr. Trimm looked sharply at her face. And how long has this been going on?'

'All my life—though—well, how can I explain, papa? You ought to understand. One finds out such things all at once, and then one knows that they have always been there.'

'I suppose so,' said Sherry. 'You did not know that "it," as you call it, was there when I went away?'

'Oh, yes, I did.'

'Well, did you know it a year ago?'

'No, perhaps not. Oh! papa, this is like twenty questions. Mamie laughed happily.

'Is it? Never played the game—cannot say. And you have no doubts about him, have you?'

'How can anybody doubt him!' Mamie exclaimed indignantly.

'It is my business to doubt,' said Sherry Trimm with a twinkle in his eye. '"I am the doubter and the doubt"—never knew what it meant till to-day.'

'Then go away, papa!' laughed the young girl.

'And let George have a chance. I suppose that is what you mean. On the whole, perhaps I could do nothing better. But I will just see whether he has any doubts, and finish my cigar with him.'

Thereupon Sherrington Trimm turned sharply on his heel and went in search of George. He found him standing on the verandah pensively examining a trail of ants that were busily establishing communication between the garden walk and a tiny fragment of sponge-cake which had fallen upon the step during afternoon tea.

'George,' said Sherry in business-like tones, through which, however, the man's kindly good-nature was clearly appreciable, 'do you mind telling me in a few words why you want to marry my daughter?'

George turned his head, and there was a pleasant smile upon his face. Then he pointed to the trail of ants.

'Mr. Sherrington Trimm,' he said, 'do you mind explaining to me very briefly why those ants are so particularly anxious to get at that piece of cake?'

'Like it, I suppose,' Sherry answered laconically.

'That is exactly my case. I have gone to the length of falling very much in love with Mamie, and I wish to marry her. I understand that her views coincide with mine and that you make no objections. I think that the explanation is complete.'

'Very well stated. Now, look here. The only thing I care for on earth is that child's happiness. She is not like all girls. You may have found that out by this time. If you behave yourself as I think you will, she will be the best wife to you that man ever had. If you do not—well, there is no knowing what she will do, but whatever it is, it will surprise you. I do not know whether hearts break nowadays as easily as they used to, and I am not prepared to state positively that Mamie's heart would break under the circumstances. But if you do not treat her properly, she will make it pretty deuced hot for you, and by the Eternal so will I, my boy! I like to put the thing in its proper light.'

'You do,' laughed George, 'with uncommon clearness. I am prepared to run all risks of that sort.'

'Hope so,' returned Sherry Trimm, smoking thoughtfully. 'Now then, George,' he resumed in a more confidential tone, after a short pause, 'there is a little matter of business between you and me. We are old friends, and I might be your father in point

of age, and now about to become your father-in-law in point of fact. How about the bread-and-butter? I have no intention of giving Mamie a fortune. No, no, I know you are aware of that, but there are material considerations, you know. Now, just give me an idea of how you propose to live.'

'If I do not lose my health, we can live very comfortably,' George answered. 'I think I can undertake to say that we should need no help. It would not be like this—like your way of living, of course. But we can have all we need and a certain amount of small luxury.'

'Hum!' ejaculated Sherry Trimm in a doubting tone. 'Not much luxury, I am afraid.'

'A certain amount,' George answered quietly. 'I have earned over ten thousand dollars during the last year, and I have kept most of it.'

'Really!' exclaimed the other. 'I did not know that literature was such a good thing. But you may not always earn as much, next year, or the year after.'

'That is unlikely, unless I break down. I do not know why that should happen to me.'

'You do not look like it,' said Sherry, eyeing George's spare and vigorous frame, and his clear, brown skin.

'I do not feel like it,' said George.

'Well, look here. I will tell you what I will do. I have my own reasons for not giving you a house just now. But I will give Mamie just half as much as you make, right along. I suppose that is fair. I need not tell you that she will have everything some day.'

'You may give Mamie anything you like,' George answered indifferently. 'I shall never ask questions. If I fall ill and cannot work for a long time together, you will have to support her, and my father will support me.'

'I daresay we could spare you a crust, my boy,' said Sherrington Trimm, laying his small hand upon George's broad, bony shoulder and pushing him along. 'I do not want to keep you any longer, if you have anything to do.'

George sauntered away in the direction of the garden, and Sherry Trimm went indoors to find his wife. Totty met him in the drawing-room, having just returned from a secret interview with her cook, in the interests of Sherry's first dinner at home.

'Totty, look here,' he said, selecting a comfortable chair and sitting down. He leaned back, crossed his legs, raised his hands

and set them together, thumb to thumb and finger to finger, but said nothing more.

'I am looking,' said Totty with a sweet smile. She seated herself beside him. 'I have already looked. You are wonderfully better—I am so glad.'

'Yes. Those waters have screwed me up a peg. But that is not what I mean. When I say look here, I mean to suggest that you should concentrate your gigantic intellect upon the consideration of the matter in hand. You have made this match, and you are responsible for it. Will you tell me why you have made it?'

'How do you mean that I have made it?' asked Totty evasively.

'Innocence, thy name is Charlotte!' exclaimed Sherry, looking at the ceiling. 'You brought George here, you knew that Mamie liked him and that he would like her, not on the first day, nor on the second, but inevitably on the third or fourth. You knew that on the fifth day they would love each other, that they would tell each other so on the sixth, and that the seventh day, being one of rest, would be devoted to obtaining our consent. You knew also that George was, and is, a penniless author—I admit that he earns a good deal—and yet you have done all in your power to make Mamie marry him. The fact that I like him has nothing to do with it.'

'Nothing to do with it! Oh, Sherry, how can you say such things!'

'Nothing whatever. I would have liked lots of other young fellows just as well. What especial reason had you for selecting this particular young fellow? That is what I want to get at.'

'Oh, is that all? Mamie loved him, my dear. I knew it long ago, and as I knew that you would not disapprove, I brought him here. It is not a question of money. We have more than we can ever need. It is not as if we had two or three sons to start in the world, Sherry.'

She lent an intonation of sadness to the last words, which, as she was aware, always produced the same effect upon her husband. He had bitterly regretted having no son to bear his honourable name.

'That is just it,' he answered sadly. 'Mamie is everything, and everything is for her. That is the reason why we should be careful. She is not like a great many girls. She has a heart, and she will break it if she is not happy.'

'That is the very reason. You do not seem to realise that she is madly in love.'

'No doubt; but was she madly in love, as you call it, when you brought them here?'

'Long before that—'

'Then why did you never tell me?—we might have had him to the house all the time—'

'Because I supposed, as everyone else did, that he meant to marry Constance Fearing. I did not want to spoil his life, and I thought that Mamie would get over it. But the thing came to nothing. In fact, I begin to believe that there never was anything in it, and that the story was all idle gossip from beginning to end. He is on as good terms as ever with her, and goes over there from time to time to console poor Grace.'

'Oh!' ejaculated Sherry in a thoughtful tone.

'You need not say "oh," like that. There is nothing to be afraid of. It is perfectly natural that the poor woman should like to see him, when he nearly died in trying to save her husband. They say she is in a dreadful state, half-mad, and ill, and so changed!'

'Poor John!' exclaimed Sherry sadly. 'I shall never see his like again.' He sighed, for he had been very fond of the man, besides looking upon him as a most promising partner in his law business.

'It was dreadful!' Mrs. Trimm shuddered as she thought of the accident. 'I cannot bear to think about it,' she added.

A short pause followed, during which Totty wore a very sad expression, and Sherry examined attentively a ring he wore upon his finger, in which a dark sapphire was set between two very white diamonds.

'There is one thing,' he said suddenly. 'The sooner we pull up stakes the better. I do not propose to spend the best part of my life in the cars. The weather is cool and we will go back to town. So pack up your traps, Totty, and let us be off. Have you written to Tom?'

'No,' said Totty. 'I would not announce the engagement till we were settled in town.'

Sherrington Trimm departed on the following morning, alleging with truth that the business could not be allowed to go to pieces. Totty and the two young people were to return two or three days later, and active preparations were at once made for moving. Totty, indeed, could not bear the idea of allowing her

husband to remain alone in New York. It was possible that at any moment he might discover that the will was missing from her brother's box. She might, indeed, have been spared much anxiety in this matter had she known that although Sherry had sealed and marked the document himself, it was not he who had placed it in the receptacle where it had been found by his wife. Sherry had handed it across the table to John Bond, telling him to put it in Craik's deed-box, and had seen John leave the room with it, but had never seen it since. It was not, indeed, until much later that he had communicated to his partner the contents of the paper. If it could not now be found, Sherry would suppose that John had accidentally put it into the wrong box and a general search would be made. Then it would be thought that John had mislaid it. In any case poor John was dead and could not defend himself. Sherry would go directly to Tom Craik and get him to sign a duplicate, but he would never, under any conceivable combination of circumstances, connect his wife with the disappearance of the will, nor mention the fact in her presence. Totty, however, was ignorant of these facts, and lived in the constant fear of being obliged to explain matters to her husband. Though she had thought much of the matter, she had not thought of any expedient for restoring the document to its place. She kept it in a small Indian cabinet which her brother had once given her, in which there was a hidden drawer of which no one knew the secret but herself. This cabinet she had brought with her and had kept all through the summer in a prominent place in the drawing-room, justly deeming that things are generally most safely hidden when placed in the most exposed position, where no one would ever think of looking for them. On returning to New York the cabinet was again packed in one of Totty's own boxes, but the will was temporarily concealed about her person, to be restored to its hiding-place as soon as she reached the town house.

Before leaving the neighbourhood George felt that it was his duty to apprise Constance and her sister of his departure, but he avoided the necessity of making a visit by writing a letter to Grace. It seemed to him more fitting that he should address his note to her rather than to her sister, considering all that had happened. He urged that both should return to New York before the winter began, and he inserted a civil message for Constance before he concluded.

Mamie took an affectionate leave of the place in which she had been so happy. During the last hours of the day preceding

their return to town, George never left her side, while she wandered through the walks of the garden and beneath the beautiful trees, back to the house, in and out of the rooms, then lingered again upon the verandah and gazed at the distant river. He watched the movements of her faultless figure as she sat down for the last time in the places where they had so often sat together, then rose quickly, and, linking her arm in his, led him away to some other well-remembered spot.

'I have been so happy here!' she said for the hundredth time.

'You shall be as happy in other places, if I can make you so,' George answered.

'Shall we? Shall I?' she asked, looking up into his face. 'Who can tell! One is never so sure of the future as one is of the past—and the present. Shall we take it all with us to our little house in New York? How funny it will seem to be living all alone with you in a little house! I shall not give you champagne every day, George. You need not expect it! It will be a very little house, and I shall do all the work.'

'If you will allow me to black the boots, I shall be most happy,' said George. 'I know how.'

'Imagine! You, blacking boots!' exclaimed Mamie, indignantly.

'Why not? But seriously, we can do a great deal more than you fancy—provided, as you say, that we do not go in for champagne every day, and keep horses and all that.'

'I think we shall have more champagne and horses than other things,' Mamie answered with a laugh. Mamma is going to keep a carriage for me, as well as my dear old riding-horse, and papa told me not to let you buy any wine, because there was some of that particular kind you like on the way out. Between you and me, I do not think they really expect us to be in the least economical, though mamma is always talking about it.'

She was very happy, and it was impossible for her to cloud the future by the idea of being deprived of any of the luxury to which she had always been accustomed. She knew in her heart that she was both willing and able to undergo any privation for George's sake, but it would have been unlike her to talk of what she would or could do when there was no immediate prospect of doing it. Her chief thought was to make her husband's house comfortable, and if she knew something of the art from having watched her mother, she knew also that comfort, as she under-

stood it, required a very free use of money. George knew it too, since he had been brought up in luxury, and had been deprived of it at the age when such things are most keenly felt. The terrible, noiseless, hourly expenditure that he had seen in Totty's house made the exiguity of his own resources particularly apparent to his judgment.

'Good-bye, dear old place!' cried the young girl, as they stood on the verandah at dusk, before going in to dress for dinner. She threw kisses with her fingers at the garden and at the trees.

George stood by her side in silence, gazing out at the dim outline of the distant hills beyond the river.

'Are you not sorry to leave it all?' Mamie asked.

'Very sorry,' he answered, as though not knowing what he said. Then he stooped and kissed her small white face, and they both went in.

That night George sat up late in his room looking over the manuscript that had grown under his hand during the summer months. It was all but finished, and he intended to write the last chapter in New York, but it interested him to look through it before leaving the surroundings in which it had been written. What most struck him in the work was the care with which it was done. It was not a very imaginative book, but it was remarkable for its truth and clearness of style. He wondered at the coldness of certain scenes, which in his first conception of the story had promised to be the most dramatic. He wondered still more at the success with which he had handled points which in themselves seemed to be far from attractive to the novelist. His conversations were better than they had formerly been, but the love-scenes were unsatisfactory, and he determined that he would re-write some of them. The whole book looked too truthful and too little enthusiastic to him now, though he fancied that he had passed through moments of enthusiasm while he was writing it. On the whole, it was a disappointment to himself, and he believed that others would be disappointed likewise. He asked himself what Johnson would think of it, and made up his mind to abide by his opinion. Vaguely, too, as one sometimes longs to see again a book once read, he wished that he might have Constance's criticism and advice, though he was conscious at the time that it was not the sort of story she would have liked.

Two days later he found himself once more in his little room in his father's house. The old gentleman received the news of

the engagement in silence. He had guessed that matters would terminate as they had, and the prospect had given him little satisfaction. He thought that the alliance would probably cut him off from his son's society, and he was inwardly hurt that George should seem indifferent to the fact. But he said nothing. From the worldly point of view the marriage was a brilliant one, and it meant that George must ultimately be a rich man. His future, at least, was provided for.

George found Johnson hard at work, as usual, and, if possible, paler and more earnest than before. He had taken a week's holiday during the hottest part of the summer, but with that exception had never relaxed in his astounding industry since they had last met.

'How particularly sleek you look,' he said, scrutinising George's face as the latter sat down.

'I feel sleek,' George answered with a slight laugh. 'I believe that is what is the matter with the book I have been writing since I saw you. I am not satisfied with it, and I want your opinion. I sat up all last night to write the last chapter in my old den. I think it is better than the rest.'

'That is a pity. It will look like a new silk hat on a beggar, or like a wig on a soup-tureen, as the Frenchmen say. But I daresay you are quite wrong about the rest of it. You generally are. For a man who can write a good story in good English when he tries, you have as little confidence as I ever saw in any one. The public does not write books, and does not know how they are written. It will never find out that you wrote the beginning in clover and the end in nettles.'

'Oh—the public!' exclaimed George. 'One never knows what it will do.'

'One may guess, sometimes. The public consists of a vast collection of individuals collected in a crowd around the feet of four great beasts. There is the ignorant beast and the learned beast, the virtuous beast and the vicious beast. They are all four beasts in their way, because they all represent an immense accumulation of prejudice, in four different followings, all pulling different ways. You cannot possibly please them all, and it is quite useless to try.'

'I suppose you mean that the four beasts are the four kinds of critics. Is that it?'

'No,' Johnson answered. 'That is not it at all. If we critics had more real influence with the public, the public would be all

the better for it. As it is, the real critic is dying out, because the public will not pay enough to keep him alive. It is sad, but I suppose it is natural. This is the age of free thought, and the phrase, if you interpret it as most people do, means that all men are to consider themselves critics, whether they know anything or not. Have you brought your manuscript with you?

'No. I wanted to ask first whether you would read it.'

'You need not be so humble, now that you are a celebrity,' said Johnson with a laugh. 'You do not look the part, either. What has happened to you?'

'I am going to be married,' George answered. 'I am to marry my cousin, Miss Trimm.'

'Not Sherrington Trimm's daughter!'

'The same, if it please you.'

'I congratulate you on leaving the literary career,' said Johnson with a sardonic smile. 'I suppose you will never do another stroke of work. Well—it is a pity.'

'I have to work for my living as I have done for years,' George answered. 'Do you imagine that I would live upon other people's money?'

'Do you really mean to go on working?'

'Of course I do, as long as I can hold a pen. I should if I were rich in my own right, for love of the thing.'

'Love of the thing is not enough. Are you ambitious?'

'I do not know. I never thought about it. To me, the question is whether a thing is well done or not, for its own sake. The success of it means money, which I need, but apart from that I do not think I care very much about it. I may be mistaken. I value your opinion, for instance, and if I knew other men like you, I should value theirs.'

'You will never succeed to any extent without ambition,' Johnson answered with great energy. 'It is everything in literature. You must feel that you will go mad if you are not first, if you are not acknowledged to be better than any one else during your lifetime. You must make people understand that you are a dangerous rival, and you must have the daily satisfaction of knowing that they feel it. Literature is like the storming of a redoubt, you must climb upon the bodies of the slain and be the first to plant your flag on the top. You must lie awake all night, and torment yourself all day to find some means of doing a thing better than other people. To be first, always, all your life,

without fear of competition, to be Cæsar or to be nothing ! I wish I could make you feel what I feel !'

'I think I would rather not,' said George. 'It must be very disturbing to the judgment to be always comparing oneself with others instead of trying to do the best one can in an independent way.'

'You will never succeed without ambition,' Johnson repeated confidently.

'Then I am afraid I shall never succeed at all, for I have not a spark of that sort of ambition. I do not care a straw for being thought better than any one else, nor for being a celebrity. I want to satisfy myself, my own idea of what is a good book, and I am afraid I never shall. I suppose that is a sort of ambition too.'

'It is not the right sort.'

George knew his friend very well, and was familiar with most of his ideas. He respected his character, and he valued his opinion more than that of any man in his acquaintance, but he could never accept his theories as infallible. He felt that if he ever succeeded in writing a book that pleased him he would recognise its merits sooner than any one, and but for the necessity of earning a livelihood he would have systematically destroyed all his writings until he had attained a satisfactory result. That a certain amount of reputation might be gained by publishing what he regarded as incomplete or inartistic work was to him a matter of indifference, except for the material advantages which resulted from the transaction. Such, at least, was his belief about himself. That he was able to appreciate flattery when it was of a good and subtle quality, only showed him that he was human, but did not improve his own estimation of his productions.

A week later, Johnson returned the manuscript with a note in which he gave his opinion of it.

'It will sell,' he wrote. 'You are quite mistaken about yourself, as usual. You told me the other day that you had no ambition. Your book proves that you have. You have taken the subject treated by Wiggins in his last great novel. It made a sensation, but in my opinion you have handled it better than he did, though he is called a great novelist. It was a very ambitious thing to do, and it is wonderful that, while taking a precisely similar situation, there should not be a word in your book that recalls his. After this, do not tell me that you have no ambition, for it is sheer nonsense. As for the last chapter, I should not have known that it was not written under the same circumstances as all the rest.'

George laughed aloud to himself. He knew the name of Wiggins well enough, but he had never read one of the celebrated author's books, and if he had he would assuredly not have taken his plot.

'But Johnson could not know that,' he said to himself, 'and I have written just such stuff about other people.'

The book went to the publisher and he thought no more of it. During the time that followed his days were very fully occupied. Between making the necessary preparations for his approaching marriage, and the pleasant duty of spending a certain number of hours with Mamie every day, he had very little time to call his own, although nothing of any importance happened to vary the course of his life. At the beginning of November Constance Fearing and her sister returned to town, and at about the same time he was informed by Sherrington Trimm that it would be necessary for him to visit Mr. Thomas Craik, as he was about to become that gentleman's nephew by marriage.

'Of course, I know all about the old story, George,' said Sherry. 'But if I were you I would at least try and be civil. The fact is, I have reason to know that he is haunted by a sort of half-stagey, half-honest remorse for what he did, and he is very much pleased with the marriage, besides being a great admirer of your books.'

'All right,' said George, 'I will be civil enough.'

Sherry Trimm had conveyed exactly the impression which he had desired to convey. He had made George believe by his manner that he was himself anxious to keep his relations with Mr. Craik on a pleasant footing, doubtless on account of the money, and he had effectually deterred George from quarrelling with his unknown benefactor, while he had kept the question of the will as closely secret as ever.

*(To be continued.)*

## *A Desert Fruit.*

WHO knows the Mediterranean, knows the prickly pear. Not that that quaint and uncanny-looking cactus, with its yellow blossoms and bristling fruits that seem to grow paradoxically out of the edge of thick fleshy leaves, is really a native of Italy, Spain, and North Africa, where it now abounds on every sun-smitten hillside. Like Mr. Henry James and Mr. Marion Crawford, the Barbary fig, as the French call it, is, in point of fact, an American citizen, domiciled and half naturalised on this side of the Atlantic, but redolent still at heart of its Columbian origin. Nothing is more common, indeed, than to see classical pictures of the Alma-Tadema school—not, of course, from the brush of the master himself, who is impeccable in such details, but fair works of decent imitators—in which Caia or Marcia leans gracefully in her white stole on one pensive elbow against a marble lintel, beside a courtyard decorated with a Pompeian basin, and overgrown with prickly pear or 'American aloes.' I need hardly say that, as a matter of plain historical fact, neither cactuses nor agaves were known in Europe till long after Christopher Columbus had steered his wandering bark to the sandy shores of Cat's Island in the Bahamas. (I have seen Cat's Island with these very eyes, and can honestly assure you that its shores *are* sandy.) But this is only one among the many pardonable little inaccuracies of painters, who thrust scarlet geraniums from the Cape of Good Hope into the fingers of Aspasia, or supply King Solomon in all his glory with Japanese lilies of the most recent introduction.

At the present day, it is true, both the prickly-pear cactus and the American agave (which the world at large insists upon confounding with the aloe, a member of a totally distinct family) have spread themselves in an apparently wild condition over all the rocky coasts both of Southern Europe and of Northern Africa. The alien desert weeds have fixed their roots firmly in the sun-

baked clefts of Ligurian Apennines ; the tall candelabrum of the western agave has reared its great spike of branching blossoms (which flower, not once in a century, as legend avers, but once in some fifteen years or so) on all the basking hillsides of the Mauritanian Atlas. But for the origin, and therefore for the evolutionary history, of either plant, we must look away from the shore of the inland sea to the arid expanse of the Mexican desert. It was there, among the sweltering rocks of the *Tierras Calientes*, that these ungainly cactuses first learned to clothe themselves in prickly mail, to store in their loose tissues an abundant supply of sticky moisture, and to set at defiance the persistent attacks of all external enemies. The prickly pear, in fact, is a typical instance of a desert plant, as the camel is a typical instance of a desert animal. Each lays itself out to endure the long droughts of its almost rainless habitat by drinking as much as it can when opportunity offers, hoarding up the superfluous water for future use, and economising evaporation by every means in its power.

If you ask that convenient fiction, the *Man in the Street*, what sort of plant a cactus is, he will probably tell you it is all leaf and no stem, and each of the leaves grows out of the last one. Whenever we set up the *Man in the Street*, however, you must have noticed we do it in order to knock him down again like a nine-pin next moment : and this particular instance is no exception to the rule ; for the truth is that a cactus is practically all stem and no leaves, what looks like a leaf being really a branch sticking out at an angle. The true leaves, if there are any, are reduced to mere spines or prickles on the surface, while the branches, in the prickly-pear and many of the ornamental hot-house cactuses, are flattened out like a leaf to perform foliar functions. In most plants, to put it simply, the leaves are the mouths and stomachs of the organism ; their thin and flattened blades are spread out horizontally in a wide expanse, covered with tiny throats and lips which suck in carbonic acid from the surrounding air, and disintegrate it in their own cells under the influence of sunlight. In the prickly pears, on the contrary, it is the flattened stem and branches which undertake this essential operation in the life of the plant—the sucking-in of carbon and giving-out of oxygen, which is to the vegetable exactly what the eating and digesting of food is to the animal organism. In their old age, however, the stems of the prickly pear display their true character by becoming woody in texture and losing their articulated leaf-like appearance.

Everything on this earth can best be understood by investigating the history of its origin and development, and in order to understand this curious reversal of the ordinary rule in the cactus tribe we must look at the circumstances under which the race was evolved in the howling waste of American deserts. (All deserts have a prescriptive right to howl, and I wouldn't for worlds deprive them of the privilege.) Some familiar analogies will help us to see the utility of this arrangement. Everybody knows our common English stone-crops—or if he doesn't he ought to, for they are pretty and ubiquitous. Now stone-crops grow for the most part in chinks of the rock or thirsty sandy soil; they are essentially plants of very dry positions. Hence they have thick and succulent little stems and leaves, which merge into one another by imperceptible gradations. All parts of the plant alike are stumpy, green, and cylindrical. If you squash them with your finger and thumb you find that though the outer skin or epidermis is thick and firm, the inside is sticky, moist, and jelly-like. The reason for all this is plain; the stone-crops drink greedily by their roots whenever they get a chance, and store up the water so obtained to keep them from withering under the hot and pitiless sun that beats down upon them for hours in the baked clefts of their granite matrix. It's the camel trick over again. So leaves and stem grow thick and round and juicy within; but outside they are enclosed in a stout layer of epidermis, which consists of empty glassy cells, and which can be peeled off or flayed with a knife like the skin of an animal. This outer layer prevents evaporation, and is a marked feature of all succulent plants which grow exposed to the sun on arid rocks or in sandy deserts.

The tendency to produce rounded stems and leaves, little distinguishable from one another, is equally noticeable in many seaside plants which frequent the strip of thirsty sand beyond the reach of the tides. That belt of dry beach that stretches between high-water mark and the zone of vegetable mould, is to all intents and purposes a miniature desert. True, it is watered by rain from time to time; but the drops sink in so fast that in half an hour, as we know, the entire strip is as dry as Sahara again. Now there are many shore weeds of this intermediate sand-belt which mimic to a surprising degree the chief external features of the cactuses. One such weed, the common *salicornia*, which grows in sandy bottoms or hollows of the beach, has a jointed stem, branched and succulent, after the true cactus pattern, and entirely without

leaves or their equivalents in any way. Still more cactus-like in general effect is another familiar English seaside weed, the kali or glasswort, so called because it was formerly burnt to extract the soda. The glasswort has leaves, it is true, but they are thick and fleshy, continuous with the stem, and each one terminating in a sharp, needle-like spine, which effectually protects the weed against all browsing aggressors.

Now, wherever you get very dry and sandy conditions of soil, you get this same type of cactus-like vegetation—*plantes grasses*, as the French well call them. The species which exhibit it are not necessarily related to one another in any way; often they belong to most widely distinct families; it is an adaptive resemblance alone, due to similarity of external circumstances only. The plants have to fight against the same difficulties, and they adopt for the most part the same tactics to fight them with. In other words, any plant, of whatever family, which wishes to thrive in desert conditions, must almost as a matter of course become thick and succulent, so as to store up water, and must be protected by a stout epidermis to prevent its evaporation under the fierce heat of the sunlight. They do not necessarily lose their leaves in the process; but the jointed stem usually answers the purpose of leaves under such conditions far better than any thin and exposed blade could do in the arid air of a baking desert. And therefore, as a rule, desert plants are leafless.

In India, for example, there are no cactuses. But I wouldn't advise you to dispute the point with a peppery, fire-eating Anglo-Indian colonel. I did so once, myself, at the risk of my life, at a *table d'hôte* on the Continent; and the wonder is that I'm still alive to tell the story. I had nothing but facts on my side, while the colonel had fists, and probably pistols. And when I say no cactuses, I mean, of course, no indigenous species; for prickly pears and epiphyllums may naturally be planted by the hand of man anywhere. But what people take for thickets of cactus in the Indian jungle are really thickets of cactus-like spurge. In the dry soil of India, many spurges grow thick and succulent, learn to suppress their leaves, and assume the bizarre forms and quaint jointed appearance of the true cactuses. In flower and fruit, however, they are euphorbias to the end; it is only in the thick and fleshy stem that they resemble their nobler and more beautiful Western rivals. No true cactus grows truly wild anywhere on earth except in America. The family was developed there, and, till man transplanted it, never succeeded in gaining a

foothold elsewhere. Essentially tropical in type, it was provided with no means of dispersing its seeds across the enormous expanse of intervening ocean which separated its habitat from the sister continents.

But why are cactuses so almost universally prickly? From the grotesque little melon-cactuses of our English hothouses to the huge and ungainly monsters which form miles of hedgerows on Jamaican hillsides, the members of this desert family are mostly distinguished by their abundant spines and thorns, or by the irritating hairs which break off in your skin if you happen to brush inadvertently against them. Cactuses are the hedgehogs of the vegetable world; their motto is *Nemo me impune lacerbit*. Many a time in the West Indies I have pushed my hand for a second into a bit of tangled 'bush,' as the negroes call it, to seize some rare flower or some beautiful insect, and been punished for twenty-four hours afterwards by the stings of the almost invisible and glass-like little 'cactus-needles.' When you rub them they only break in pieces, and every piece inflicts a fresh wound on the flesh where it rankles. Some of the species have large, stout prickles; some have clusters of irritating hairs at measured distances; and some rejoice in both means of defence at once, scattered impartially over their entire surface. In the prickly pear, the bundles of prickles are arranged geometrically with great regularity in a perfect quincunx. But that is a small consolation indeed to the reflective mind when you've stung yourself badly with them.

The reason for this bellicose disposition on the part of the cactuses is a tolerably easy one to guess. Fodder is rare in the desert. The starving herbivores that find themselves from time to time belated on the confines of such thirsty regions would seize with avidity upon any succulent plant which offered them food and drink at once in their last extremity. Fancy the joy with which a lost caravan, dying of hunger and thirst in the byways of Sahara, would hail a great bed of melons, cucumbers, and lettuces! Needless to say, however, under such circumstances melon, cucumber, and lettuce would soon be exterminated: they would be promptly eaten up at discretion without leaving a descendant to represent them in the second generation. In the ceaseless war between herbivore and plant, which is waged every day and all day long the whole world over with far greater persistence than the war between carnivore and prey, only those species of plant can survive in such exposed situations which

happen to develop spines, thorns, or prickles as a means of defence against the mouths of hungry and desperate assailants.

Nor is this so difficult a bit of evolution as it looks at first sight. Almost all plants are more or less covered with hairs, and it needs but a slight thickening at the base, a slight woody deposit at the point, to turn them forthwith into the stout prickles of the rose or the bramble. Most leaves are more or less pointed at the end or at the summits of the lobes; and it needs but a slight intensification of this pointed tendency to produce forthwith the sharp defensive foliage of gorse, thistles, and holly. Often one can see all the intermediate stages still surviving under one's very eyes. The thistles themselves, for example, vary from soft and unarmed species which haunt out-of-the-way spots beyond the reach of browsing herbivores, to such trebly-mailed types as that enemy of the agricultural interest, the creeping thistle, in which the leaves continue themselves as prickly wings down every side of the stem, so that the whole plant is amply clad from head to foot in a defensive coat of fierce and bristling spearheads. There is a common little English meadow weed, the rest-harrow, which in rich and uncropped fields produces no defensive armour of any sort; but on the much-browsed-over suburban commons and in similar exposed spots, where only gorse and blackthorn stand a chance for their lives against the cows and donkeys, it has developed a protected variety in which some of the branches grow abortive, and end abruptly in stout spines like a hawthorn's. Only those rest-harrows have there survived in the sharp struggle for existence which happened most to baffle their relentless pursuers.

Desert plants naturally carry this tendency to its highest point of development. Nowhere else is the struggle for life so fierce; nowhere else is the enemy so goaded by hunger and thirst to desperate measures. It is a place for internecine warfare. Hence, all desert plants are quite absurdly prickly. The starving herbivores will attack and devour under such circumstances even thorny weeds, which tear or sting their tender tongues and palates, but which supply them at least with a little food and moisture: so the plants are compelled in turn to take almost extravagant precautions. Sometimes the leaves end in a stout dagger-like point, as with the agave, or so-called American aloe; sometimes they are reduced to mere prickles or bundles of needle-like spikes; sometimes they are suppressed altogether, and the work of defence is undertaken in their stead by irritating hairs intermixed with caltrops of spines pointing outward from a common centre in

every direction. When one remembers how delicately sensitive are the tender noses of most browsing herbivores, one can realise what an excellent mode of defence these irritating hairs must naturally constitute. I have seen cows in Jamaica almost maddened by their stings, and even savage bulls will think twice in their rage before they attempt to make their way through the serried spears of a dense cactus hedge. To put it briefly, plants have survived under very arid or sandy conditions precisely in proportion as they displayed this tendency towards the production of thorns, spines, bristles, and prickles.

It is a marked characteristic of the cactus tribe to be very tenacious of life, and when hacked to pieces, to spring afresh in full vigour from every scrap or fragment. True vegetable hydras, when you cut down one, ten spring in its place; every separate morsel of the thick and succulent stem has the power of growing anew into a separate cactus. Surprising as this peculiarity seems at first sight, it is only a special desert modification of a faculty possessed in a less degree by almost all plants and by many animals. If you cut off the end of a rose branch and stick it in the ground under suitable conditions, it grows into a rose tree. If you take cuttings of scarlet geraniums or common verbenas, and pot them in moist soil, they bud out apace into new plants like their parents. Certain special types can even be propagated from fragments of the leaf; for example, there is a particularly vivacious begonia off which you may snap a corner of one blade, and hang it up by a string from a peg or the ceiling, when, hi presto! little begonia plants begin to bud out incontinently on every side from its edges. A certain German professor went even further than that; he chopped up a liverwort very fine into vegetable mincemeat, which he then spread thin over a saucerful of moist sand, and lo! in a few days the whole surface of the mess was covered with a perfect forest of sprouting little liverworts. Roughly speaking, one may say that every fragment of every organism has in it the power to rebuild in its entirety another organism like the one of which it once formed a component element.

Similarly with animals. Cut off a lizard's tail, and straightway a new tail grows in its place with surprising promptitude. Cut off a lobster's claw, and in a very few weeks that lobster is walking about airily on his native rocks, with two claws as usual. True, in these cases the tail and the claw don't bud out in turn into a new lizard or a new lobster. But that is a penalty the

higher organisms have to pay for their extreme complexity. They have lost that plasticity, that freedom of growth, which characterises the simpler and more primitive forms of life; in their case the power of producing fresh organisms entire from a single fragment, once diffused equally over the whole body, is now confined to certain specialised cells which, in their developed form, we know as seeds or eggs. Yet, even among animals, at a low stage of development, this original power of reproducing the whole from a single part remains inherent in the organism; for you may chop up a fresh-water hydra into a hundred little bits, and every bit will be capable of growing afresh into a complete hydra.

Now, desert plants would naturally retain this primitive tendency in a very high degree; for they are specially organised to resist drought—being the survivors of generations of drought-proof ancestors—and, like the camel, they have often to struggle on through long periods of time without a drop of water. Exactly the same thing happens at home to many of our pretty little European stone-crops. I have a rockery near my house overgrown with the little white sedum of our gardens. The birds often peck off a tiny leaf or branch; it drops on the dry soil, and remains there for days without giving a sign of life. But its thick epidermis effectually saves it from withering; and as soon as rain falls, wee white rootlets sprout out from the under side of the fragment as it lies, and it grows before long into a fresh small sedum plant. Thus, what seem like destructive agencies themselves, are turned in the end by mere tenacity of life into a secondary means of propagation.

That is why the prickly pear is so common in all countries where the climate suits it, and where it has once managed to gain a foothold. The more you cut it down, the thicker it springs; each murdered bit becomes the parent in due time of a numerous offspring. Man, however, with his usual ingenuity, has managed to best the plant, on this its own ground, and turn it into a useful fodder for his beasts of burden. The prickly pear is planted abundantly on bare rocks in Algeria, where nothing else would grow, and is cut down when adult, divested of its thorns by a rough process of hacking, and used as food for camels and cattle. It thus provides fresh moist fodder in the African summer when the grass is dried up and all other pasture crops have failed entirely.

The flowers of the prickly pear, as of many other cactuses,

grow apparently on the edge of the leaves, which alone might give the observant mind a hint as to the true nature of those thick and flattened expansions. For whenever what look like leaves bear flowers or fruit on their edge or midrib, as in the familiar instance of butcher's broom, you may be sure at a glance they are really branches in disguise masquerading as foliage. The blossoms in the prickly pear are large, handsome, and yellow ; at least, they would be handsome if one could ever see them, but they're generally covered so thick in dust that it's difficult properly to appreciate their beauty. They have a great many petals in numerous rows, and a great many stamens in a rosette in the centre ; and to the best of my knowledge and belief, as lawyers put it, they are fertilised for the most part by tropical butterflies ; but on this point, having observed them but little in their native habitats, I speak under correction.

The fruit itself, to which the plant owes its popular name, is botanically a berry, though a very big one, and it exhibits in a highly specialised degree the general tactics of all its family. As far as their leaf-like stems go, the main object in life of the cactuses is—not to get eaten. But when it comes to the fruit, this object in life is exactly reversed ; the plant desires its fruit to be devoured by some friendly bird or adapted animal, in order that the hard little seeds buried in the pulp within may be dispersed for germination under suitable conditions. At the same time, true to its central idea, it covers even the pear itself with deterrent and prickly hairs, meant to act as a defence against useless thieves or petty depredators, who would eat the soft pulp on the plant as it stands (much as wasps do peaches) without benefiting the species in return by dispersing its seedlings. This practice is fully in accordance with the general habit of tropical or sub-tropical fruits, which lay themselves out to deserve the kind offices of monkeys, parrots, toucans, hornbills, and other such large and powerful fruit-feeders. Fruits which arrange themselves for a *clientèle* of this character have usually thick or nauseous rinds, prickly husks, or other deterrent integuments ; but they are full within of juicy pulp, embedding stony or nutlike seeds, which pass undigested through the gizzards of their swallowers.

For a similar reason, the actual prickly pears themselves are attractively coloured. I need hardly point out, I suppose, at the present time of day, that such tints in the vegetable world act like the gaudy posters of our London advertisers. Fruits and

flowers which desire to attract the attention of beasts, birds, or insects, are tricked out in flaunting hues of crimson, purple, blue, and yellow; fruits and flowers which could only be injured by the notice of animals are small and green, or dingy and inconspicuous.

GRANT ALLEN.

*One, Two, Three.*

I SAW three witches as the wind blew cold,  
 In a red light to the lee ;  
 Bold they were, and over-bold,  
 As they sailed over the sea,  
 Calling for 'One, two, three !'  
 Calling for 'One, two, three !'  
 And I think I can hear  
 It a-ringng in my ear,  
 A-calling for their 'One, two, three !'  
 And clouds came over the sky,  
 And the wind it blew hard and free ;  
 And the waves were bold, and over-bold,  
 As we sailed over the sea ;  
 Howling for 'One, two, three !'  
 Howling for their 'One, two, three !'  
 Oh, I think I can hear  
 It a-howling in my ear,  
 Howling for their 'One, two, three !'  
 And the storm came roaring on,  
 Such a storm as I never did see,  
 And the storm it was bold, and over-bold,  
 And as bad as a storm could be ;  
 A-roaring for its 'One, two, three !'  
 A-howling for its 'One, two, three !'  
 Oh, I think I can hear  
 It a-howling in my ear,  
 Howling for its 'One, two, three !'

And a wave came over the deck,  
As big as a wave could be,  
And it took away the captain, and the mate, and a man--  
It had got the 'One, two, three !'  
It had got the 'One, two, three !'  
And it kept the 'One, two, three !'  
Oh, I think I can hear  
It a-rolling in my ear  
As it went with the 'One, two, three !'

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND.

## *The Seal-skin Purse.*

*AN INCIDENT. FOUNDED ON FACT.*

PADDINGTON Station. A raw chilly morning. A crowded platform, for it is the week before Christmas, and there is much coming and going notwithstanding the ungenial weather, which is piercingly cold without the exhilaration of frost—so cold and unpleasant, indeed, that everyone looks at everyone else with a sort of astonishment at ‘everyone else’ for being there.

‘For myself (or ourselves),’ so the look seems to say, ‘the case is different, I (or we) being obliged to travel for important reasons; but why “everyone else” cannot have the common-sense to remain at home and at least leave us the station and the porters and the hot-water tins and the most comfortable seats to ourselves, is really inexplicable.’

Such, I think, was pretty much the state of mind of a young, or youngish woman, ensconced in a first-class compartment, and comfortably enveloped in warm rugs and shawls, not to speak of muff, boa, and thickly-lined cloak. She occupied a corner seat; opposite to her sat her husband, and beside him his sister—a plain but kindly-faced old maid. At this lady’s left again, filling the further corner, was the fourth member of the party, a younger man—cousin to his three companions.

It was to his home they were all bound, there to spend Christmas. Possibly by right of his prospective host-ship, possibly for other reasons, it was evident that the three persons mentioned treated him with special consideration, approaching deference. And this was particularly noticeable in the case of the married woman of the party.

‘So lucky,’ she remarked, settling herself with complacency in her comfortable corner, ‘so really delightfully lucky that we should

be going down by the same train as you yourself, Teddy. And it's all thanks to me—it was clever of me, now wasn't it, Bernard, to have caught sight of him? Bernard is *so* absent and Prissy so absurdly near-sighted that they would *never* have seen you, Teddy.'

The repetition of the familiar abbreviation of his Christian name seemed to afford her peculiar satisfaction. In this, and in a faint—the very faintest—suspicion of a tone, rather than accent, not of the *very* purest quality, the lady, in spite of her rich and, it must be allowed, tasteful attire and undeniable good looks, betrayed that she herself was not altogether to the manner born. And such was the fact—the marriage of Miss Nora Newton, one of the several pretty daughters of a country solicitor, to Mr. Bernard Mallory, a man of good birth and considerable wealth, had been a decided rise in the social scale for the young lady. And such rises are sometimes apt to turn the head—to engender a certain dizziness, a curious loss of the sense of proportion in the subject of them. But Bernard was a sensible man—a man with small social ambition and entirely untouched by snobbishness in any of its insidious forms. Under his influence his wife kept her balance, and gradually, except under unusual provocation, sobered down into a handsome matron of sufficiently well-bred manners. Still, she was spoilt and self-assertive and not specially good-tempered. And her husband was easy-going—too easy-going—and in ordinary life too yielding. He shut his eyes to many things in Nora which he could have wished otherwise. On the present occasion she was trying him considerably by her exaggeration of friendly intimacy with his cousin, Edric Mallory, the head of the family, recently returned from some years' expatriation in the diplomatic service, and only quite lately introduced to Mrs. Bernard for the first time. 'Teddy' he had always been and would always be to his cousins, but to a cousin's wife—'Nora really might show better taste,' thought her husband, with a slight compression of the lips. But Sir Edric took it philosophically, and gentle Miss Prissy seemed happily unconscious of any failure in taste or tact on her sister-in-law's part, so Bernard let it pass.

Sir Edric Mallory was a person of consequence. This was his first Christmas at home since the family honours had devolved on him, and he was full of hospitable intentions. For the sake of the cousin, to whom he was much attached, he put up with the cousin's wife. Thus did it come about that the party of four was

travelling down to Mallory Park, greatly to Mrs. Bernard Mallory's delight, there to spend the last days of the year, with the prospect of a pleasantly full house and various festivities in the neighbourhood.

'Yes,' Sir Edric was replying to his cousin-by-marriage, in answer to her eager questions, 'Oh, yes! there are two or three balls on hand. The Hunt Ball at Darting next week is always a good one, and—'

He was interrupted. It wanted yet some few minutes to the time of departure of the train, and Mrs. Mallory looked up irritably as the door opened, letting in a chill draught of air from the outside.

'I hope to goodness no one is coming in upon us,' she said. 'We are four already. Can't we keep—'

But it was too late. A porter was already standing in the carriage, stowing away various properties in the rack.

'There is plenty of room in here, ma'am,' he called back to two ladies on the platform; 'two empty seats.'

An anxious face peered up through the open doorway.

'Oh, thank you! Yes, I think that will do nicely. Cissy, my dear, I think you will do very well in here. You like sitting with your back to the engine?'

'Yes, I do, aunty. Please don't worry about me,' replied a second voice—that of a young girl this time, who proceeded, as the porter made his exit, to mount up into the carriage. But she did not settle into her place at once; she leant out of the window—for the porter by this time had closed the door—for a last word or two with the first speaker, an elderly woman in plain, almost dowdy attire. The colloquy was distinctly audible to those inside.

'I shall be *so* anxious till I hear of your arrival,' said the elderly lady.

'I will write to-night, and *please* don't be anxious. I am sure after all it was best to come first-class,' said the girl.

'And take the middle seat—be sure you do. There is always a draught near the window, and you *must* not catch another cold.'

The girl laughed reassuringly.

'Dear aunty, my last cold was nothing at all. Besides, I am sure Miss Toppin would be very good to me if I *had* a cold. But I will take the middle seat, I promise you.'

Then came the last warning voice, 'Take your seats, please,' and the parting summons, 'Tickets,' and in another moment the door had received its final bang, and the train was slowly moving out of the station.

But Miss 'Cissy' was not yet settled. The porter had deposited her smaller belongings in the corner seat—the centre one being quite filled by the property of Mrs. Mallory, overflowing from the lady herself, next door. The girl glanced at her neighbour questioningly.

'This seat is not engaged, I think,' she said. 'May I move your dressing-bag and the other things to the corner one?'

The request caused Mrs. Mallory's wrath to explode. All this time she had been indulging in semi 'asides' of by no means an amiable character.

'Too bad. Bernard, can't you insist on our having the compartment to ourselves?' 'They have no right to keep that door open, I tell you ;' or, 'I believe they are third-class passengers trying to get in here,' were among the mildest of her remarks.

And when the newcomer turned to her with her not unreasonable request, she started almost in horror at the way in which it was received.

'Certainly not. I cannot allow any of my things to be touched. If you do not like the corner seat, you can change carriages at the next station,' said Mrs. Mallory.

The girl's face blanched. For half a moment she wondered if the handsome prosperous-looking woman beside her was quite in her right mind, and she glanced across at Bernard and his sister with a sort of inquiry. For she had never before in her life travelled alone, and even sensible people's nerves are sometimes affected by the stories of railway adventures so often related.

Then she gazed at Mrs. Mallory with a sort of blank amazement, with a vague expectation that some word of apology would follow her rude speech.

The apology came, but not from Nora.

'Allow me to move the things,' said her husband ; and the moment the girl heard his voice she knew that she had a 'gentleman' to deal with. 'The centre seat is quite as much at your disposal as the other. *Nora*,' in a tone that made his wife start as she seldom did, 'be so good as to draw that rug more your way.'

Then Cecil spoke. With the quick instinct of regret for having caused annoyance, however unwittingly, inherent in a refined and sensitive nature, she turned to Bernard.

'I am so sorry,' she said. 'It is only that I promised my aunt to take the middle seat. Oh ! really, I am so sorry to disturb you all.'

For by this time Miss Prissy, and not Miss Prissy only, but Sir Edric too, had come to her assistance. Miss Prissy was fussily endeavouring to make room for some of her sister-in-law's belongings beside herself; Sir Edric was more successfully transferring them to the corner seat opposite his own. So by degrees things righted themselves—to outward seeming at least. The offended Nora, her cheeks burning with indignation, subsided behind a book; her husband, with the compressed look about his lips which to those who knew him well meant much, turned to his sister with some commonplace remark, to which Miss Prissy replied with nervous eagerness; Sir Edric unfolded a newspaper and leant back as if absorbed in its contents, though he skilfully managed from time to time to steal a look from behind its shelter at the young traveller whose advent had created such excitement.

‘By Jove,’ he said to himself, ‘if I had known that poor Bernard’s wife was so utterly ill-bred, I should have thought twice about inviting them to Mallory. Can she not see that the girl is entirely and absolutely a lady? And even if it had not been so—’

But before long he forgot about Nora in the interest with which he furtively watched the occupant of the seat opposite Miss Prissy’s. Her young face looked very grave, almost stern, though it was easy to see that such was not its habitual expression, for all the lines were curved and gracious. She was more than pretty. But it was a kind of beauty that was not likely to be done justice to at the first glance. It grew upon you, especially if ‘you’ had good taste and some real notion of what real beauty is. Mrs. Bernard Mallory in her hasty glance at the newcomer had been quite unimpressed, and her amazement would have been great had she known the opinion arrived at by both her husband (for he, too, was noticing the girl) and his cousin as to the charms of the quiet, grave occupant of the centre seat.

In her dark, close-fitting, rough tweed dress, Cecil might have been a duchess or a daily governess. It suited Mrs. Mallory to dub her in her own mind the latter; and Bernard, too, from the allusion to going ‘first-class’ which had been overheard, somehow decided that their fellow-traveller was poor.

‘All the more unpardonable of Nora to be so rude and ill-natured,’ he reflected. ‘I do trust Teddy did not notice it much.’

No—at least, whether Sir Edric had noticed it much or not, his thoughts were now elsewhere, more pleasantly engaged. He was looking backwards and forwards; and to be able to do both

these things with a smile on one's face one must be, if not exceedingly young and inexperienced, the owner of several desirable things. A well-balanced mind first and foremost, perhaps; a conscience on the whole void of offence; an unselfish and healthy nature. And all these were his, and added thereto various material advantages, as I have said, not to be despised.

More, however, was wanting. Edric Mallory was very much alone in the world, and he was affectionate and the reverse of conceited. He longed to be cared for *for himself*. The smile which had flitted across his face once or twice as he sat there reviewing the past owed its origin to the remembrance of certain youthful experiences when he had been less on his guard than he was now—more ready to believe in disinterested motives—in a word, less worldly-wise; the smile that woke up at the vision, vague and dreamy though it was, of a possible future—of the at last lighting on the pearl within the shell—was of a different nature, tender and almost reverent.

Why had such thoughts come to him just then? Was the sight of a sweet girl-face, pure and noble in its simple dignity, enough to explain these waking dreams? Edric could almost have laughed aloud at himself.

'I had no idea I was so fantastic and sentimental,' he said to himself; 'it is really absurd. But—perhaps her face reminds me of someone—or of some picture—it is an uncommon face. I am certain she is a girl of great character as well as sweetness, and she looks so good, so sincere—I can't find the right word. I wonder if she is a governess'—somehow they had all hit on the same idea—'going to her first situation, perhaps. I hope she will be happy. Now if one could get to know a girl like that in a natural, simple sort of way, how much surer one would be than meeting girls in the rush of society—dancing and talking small talk, or in the whirl of a great country-house party.'

Cecil had taken a book out of her bag and was reading—quietly and gravely, as she had done everything so far. And Sir Edric had presumed somewhat rashly on the fact that her eyes were cast down—he had been looking at her, pretty steadily, for a moment or two. Suddenly she glanced up; their eyes met, and her face flushed deeply. The young man felt inexpressibly annoyed.

'What a set of boors she must think us,' he said to himself, as his own colour deepened.

But before he had time to consider if by any possible diplomacy

he could suggest any excuse for his apparent rudeness, the train slackened, and, glancing out, Sir Edric saw that they were close to the junction where they had to change carriages. The usual little bustle ensued. Bags, rugs, umbrellas, and books were collected; Mrs. Mallory's maid presented herself at the door, and was duly loaded; and the young stranger, left behind for a moment, soon got out and followed the stream of passengers down the platform.

Sir Edric was some little way in the rear of Bernard and his wife. A glance had told him that their fellow-traveller was coming after them, though still farther back. She was carrying her small baggage herself with a somewhat perturbed expression—the fact being that in her inexperience she had not hailed a porter quickly enough.

‘Poor thing!’ thought the young man, annoyed at the impossibility of being able to help her; ‘she has to consider fees, evidently. If Nora was a kindly-natured woman, she might have—’

But what Nora might have done was lost in what Nora *did* do. Suddenly, Sir Edric became aware that his cousin and his wife had turned back and were bearing down upon him, walking very fast, the lady's face flushed and anxious.

‘I have lost my purse,’ she exclaimed, as they drew near him. ‘Bernard, do hurry on and look in the carriage. Teddy will take care of me.’

Mr. Mallory hastened forward.

‘It is so provoking,’ said Nora. ‘I had a good deal of money in it, and I *know* I had it in the railway carriage, for I opened it to pay for a Christmas number the newsboy brought to the door. I *thought* I put it back in my pocket, but—oh! by-the-by, here is that girl—’

For, as she spoke, they came face to face with Cecil. Mrs. Mallory stopped abruptly.

‘I have lost my purse,’ she said, addressing the young girl without preface or apology; ‘a small sealskin purse with gilt fittings, and a lot of money in it. You left the carriage after us. I am sure it was on the seat. Did you see it?’

Cecil hesitated. She was startled, and for the first moment scarcely took in the sense of the words.

‘A sealskin purse,’ she repeated slowly, in the rather meaningless way one is apt mechanically to repeat what one hears when slightly dazed or confused by a sudden and unexpected demand.

'Yes, I said so—a *sealskin purse*,' Nora repeated, waxing more and more impatient. 'Ah! here is Bernard,' and for a moment her face lit up with hope; 'have you found it?'

He shook his head.

'No, it is positively not there. I looked myself, and the porter looked. It can't be helped. Perhaps you will find it after all among some of your traps.'

But Nora was not to be so smoothed down.

'Nonsense,' she said. 'It is not in my pocket, and that is the only place it *could* have been in. I did not put it in my bag. I never do. It was on the seat beside me—I am more and more certain of it—the seat this'—and she turned to Cecil, who was still standing there, as if, somehow or other, the matter concerned her—'this lady,' with a visible hesitation, 'took when she moved all my things. And you have not answered me yet,' she went on, addressing Cecil again directly; 'did you see my purse?'

'No, indeed,' the girl replied. 'Of course, had I done so, I would have told you at once.'

'You said nothing,' Mrs. Mallory persisted. 'You seemed stupefied. You stood there repeating my words. Now think better of it. You *must* have seen my purse.'

Her voice was rising, so was her temper. The altercation, or what seemed very like one, was beginning to attract the attention of those about them. Miss Prissy murmured, 'Oh, Nora, my dear! Oh, don't, Nora!' and seemed on the verge of tears. Sir Edric's eyes flashed fire, and he, as well as Bernard, was on the point of speaking, when Cecil's voice, calm but clear, made itself heard. She was putting immense control on herself.

'I am sorry for you,' she said, 'because the loss seems to have made you forget yourself, and so I tell you once more that *I never saw your purse*,' and she looked at them all—all four—as if from some unapproachable height, and then walked slowly away towards where, far to the front of the platform on the other side, the train was awaiting its passengers.

'Nora,' said her husband between his teeth, 'I am utterly ashamed of you.'

Sir Edric said nothing.

Half an hour or so later, when they reached their ultimate destination, he saw the girl again. She was walking with another old lady, who had evidently come to meet her—an old lady, plainer and dowdier even than her escort to Paddington. They were talking eagerly, but the old woman's face was beaming with smiles

and the girl's eyes shone brightly. Evidently she was telling of no disagreeable adventures.

'It scarcely looks as if she *were* a governess,' mused Sir Edric. 'At least, if that old party is the mistress of a boarding-school, she seems uncommonly kind and jolly. Perhaps, after all, *she*, with a curious catch in his breath, 'is not to be pitied. She deserves to be happy; that I could swear to. But oh, that woman! I could never venture to look in that girl's face again if I met her every day for a year.'

He smothered a sigh, and during the drive from the station to Mallory he was very grave and silent and preoccupied. So much so, that he scarcely noticed Nora's defiant allusion to the shameful episode of the journey.

'You saw the sort of woman that came to meet that girl,' she remarked to Miss Prissy. 'A regular old dowdy, like a servant. And she *kissed* the girl. I told you she was not a lady in the least. Such people have no business to travel first-class, as I know to my cost. Such a thing should *not* be passed over.'

But her remarks met with no response.

Cecil's 'Miss Topping,' the plain-looking, happy-faced old lady who had met her at the station, was a former governess of her mother's. She had known Miss Topping all her life, and loved her dearly. In return, the good lady adored her, and this two days' visit from the young girl had been her dream for many a day.

'So good of you, so sweet of you, to have come to me instead of going straight to Darting Priory,' she said, as she bade Cecil good-night that evening, having inquired for the twentieth time if there was nothing more she could do to make up for the absence of the maid, for whom there was no accommodation in her tiny dwelling. 'You are *sure* you are comfortable? I can't get over the idea of your having travelled alone for the first time in your life all to give pleasure to poor me.'

'And to myself, dear Miss Topping,' said the girl. 'I am *very* glad to be with you.'

So she was. There is nothing that makes one more truly happy than to realise that one is giving pleasure to others. And as she sat there over the cosy fire in her little bedroom, she felt glad to think that she had had the self-control not to relate to her old friend the disagreeable episode in her journey.

'She would have taken it so to heart,' thought Cecil, 'and after

all, what does it matter? That woman was really dreadful—not the least bit of a lady—and yet her husband seemed nice, and the other man was—yes, I think he was nice too. I don't think he meant to be rude. And the name on the luggage—how did I come to see it?—oh! yes, it was on the dressing-bag—seemed a good one. "Mallory, Mallory Park." I suppose it is some place near this. I will ask Miss Topping just out of curiosity.'

But her face flushed again in spite of herself as she thought over the day's adventure.

'How *dared* she?' thought Cecil.

She was a little tired, and in spite of the fire a little chilly. Her fur-lined cloak was hanging near her. Cecil stretched out her hand to reach it, and in drawing it towards her turned it half upside down. As she did so, something fell with a slight clatter on to the ground.

'Can I have left something in the pocket?' she thought. The cloak had large, rather loose pockets on the outside. She felt inside one. No, it was empty; but—her fingers strayed farther. Some stitches had given way, making a sort of little second pocket below the other, between the layers of the lining. 'Whatever it is that dropped out must have been caught in this hole. I wonder what it can be,' thought Cecil, her mind rapidly running through the list of her smaller possessions, till, to satisfy herself, she stooped down and began groping on the floor. She had not to grope long. Almost immediately her hand came in contact with a small object both hard and soft, and raising it to the light, the astounded girl saw that it was a sealskin purse—a small sealskin purse of first-rate quality, with gilt fittings, and, as it was easy to feel, well filled to boot.

Cecil's face grew crimson and then terribly white.

'That woman's purse!' she gasped in unspeakable horror.

How had it come there? Who can tell? Who can tell how these materially extraordinary things do happen—how hooks embed themselves in the wrong places with complications of ingenuity which it would take hours of labour for our clumsy fingers to achieve; how a coin carelessly dropped will seek for itself the one crevice in the parquet floor through which it could descend to the mysterious depths 'under the boards,' or hide itself beneath the one immovable piece of furniture in the room? How the purse had come there, Cecil could only conjecture. It might have been lying on the arm between the seats, and slipped on to her lap and thence into her pocket. It might have—but there

was no use in thinking how this wretched mischance had come to pass. It was so—that was enough.

Then ensued some minutes of painful reflection. What was to be done? She would not confide in poor Miss Topping and spoil the good lady's day or two of *fête*—that was certain.

'I will tell mamma all about it when I get home,' she decided unselfishly. 'Till then I will bear it alone.'

But the purse must be restored to its owner. As to this there was no practical difficulty, for Cecil had seen the address. Should she send it anonymously? No, the girl's whole instincts revolted at the thought.

'I have done nothing wrong, nothing even foolish,' she said to herself, 'and I will not seem ashamed. I will send it back openly with a note signed by myself.'

But how to find a trustworthy messenger without confiding in her hostess? There was the post; but to send money—perhaps a considerable sum—by post Cecil scarcely thought secure.

'I must manage it somehow in the morning,' she thought. And then with a resolute determination not to dwell upon the unlucky accident in any exaggerated way, poor Cecil undressed and went to bed—to bed, and after a while to sleep, though her dreams were so uncomfortable and disturbed that when morning came she felt but little rested or refreshed.

Miss Topping was near-sighted, and it was easy to put on sufficient cheerfulness to satisfy her.

'Where is Mallory Park?' Cecil succeeded in asking in an ordinary tone. 'Isn't it somewhere near here?'

'Not a quarter of a mile out of the town,' said Miss Topping. 'The Mallory Road is the prettiest side of Burnham, and the Park is a very beautiful place. Perhaps you have met Sir Edric Mallory? No, by-the-by, that is scarcely likely. He has only lately returned from Japan or somewhere.'

Cecil evaded a direct answer, but her thoughts were busy as her old friend chattered on. Only a quarter of a mile! A sudden resolution seized her.

'I should like to go a little walk this morning,' she said. 'It is fine and bright, though cold. A walk after a railway journey always does me good.'

Miss Topping's face fell.

'This morning, my love? I am so sorry. I thought of lunching early and going out immediately after; but this morning—I promised to stay in to see a servant whom one of my

nieces wants to engage. It won't take five minutes, but unluckily I don't know exactly *when* she will call.'

'Then let me go a short walk by myself, and we can have a longer one together after luncheon. No, no, you needn't shake your head. Mamma would not mind in a tiny place like this. Why, it is only a village, really! I shall not be long. It will take away the scrap of headache I have.'

She carried her point. An hour later, having well informed herself as to the way she must take, Cecil, in her dark tweed, her face paler than usual, her heart beating fast beneath her calm exterior, was entering Mallory Park through the great gates opening on to the road of the same name.

It was still early. The four Mallorys—for as yet no other guests had arrived—were lingering round the breakfast-table, when a message was brought to Mrs. Mallory.

'A young lady,' said the footman, 'is asking to see you. Her name is Miss Wood, and she wished me to say it was about something important.'

'Miss Wood?' repeated Nora. 'Who can it be? Do you know anyone of the name hereabouts, Teddy?'

Sir Edric shook his head.

'Is she *really* a lady?' inquired Mrs. Mallory, turning to the footman.

The young man glanced at his superior, the butler, who just then entered the room.

'Mr. Dickinson,' he said, 'was crossing the hall when the lady rang. Perhaps he could—'

Mr. Dickinson came forward.

'A lady,' he repeated; 'were you asking if it was a lady? Undoubtedly so, ma'am, as you request my opinion.'

Nora was a little, or a good deal, in awe of Dickinson. She rose. 'I suppose I must see her, but what a bore it is! So early—I can't understand it. In the library, did you say?' and the footman repeated the words affirmatively. 'You are more confiding in the country, I suppose,' she said laughingly to her host, as he too rose from his chair. 'In London we have to be cautious whom we admit.'

A few minutes passed. Sir Edric and Mr. Mallory were standing by the window, discussing the weather, Miss Prissy was collecting crumbs for the poor little half-starved birds on the terrace, when the door was flung open and Nora burst in. Her cheeks were very red, her eyes very sparkling—nevertheless, the effect of the whole was far from pleasing.

'Bernard, Prissy, Teddy,' she exclaimed, 'now I hope you will do me justice. See here,' and to her astonished hearers she held up—a small sealskin purse.

'Your purse,' said her husband, 'and its contents?'

'Yes—at least I hope so. I have not counted thoroughly yet. She says she has not opened it, but of course I know better than to believe *that*, and—'

'But who is "she"?' asked Sir Edric, with a strange, painful foreboding.

"She"? Why, that girl, of course—the governess, or whatever she is or pretends to be, who travelled with us yesterday, and whom you all thought me so cruel to. *Now I hope you will change your opinion.*'

'But you don't—you can't mean to say she *took* your purse. And if she did, why has she brought it back?' asked the young man, and had his cousin's wife been less absorbed she would have seen that his face was paler than usual.

She gave a disagreeable laugh.

'A bad conscience, I suppose. Fear of discovery, perhaps. She may have found out who we were,' Nora replied.

'And she has confessed to it?' exclaimed Edric, unutterably shocked. '*Impossible!*'

'Confessed? Oh, bless you, no! Of course not. How absurdly innocent you are, Teddy! She has some cock-and-bull story of finding it in the lining of her cloak—which I let her narrate—then I quietly requested her to consider herself at my mercy and not to attempt to escape till I consulted all of you. So she is there in the library. I left the door ajar and gave George a hint to stay about the hall.'

Bernard's lips drew together. He glanced at his cousin.

'Teddy,' he said, 'come with me.'

They left the room together, followed by Nora.

'I reminded her that you—the owner here—are a magistrate,' she remarked to Sir Edric triumphantly. 'I am glad you seem inclined to take it seriously. Such things should not be slurred over.'

Cecil was standing by the library table. She was trembling terribly, but she stood erect, disdaining to seek any support. One glance at her face made both the men feel that they wished the floor could open at their feet. And it was Cecil who first spoke.

'You are a magistrate, this lady tells me,' she said, addressing Sir Edric. 'That is why I have waited here, as she told me. I

will tell you both—you two men—what I have told her, and then I will go, leaving you to deal with *her* as you choose. It is nothing to me—only—I did not think there were such people in the world,’ and here, with a gasping quiver, she all but broke down.

Bernard pushed a chair towards her. She shook her head.

‘No, no, not in this house,’ she said.

Then with marvellous self-control she repeated her story, calmly and precisely. ‘I came myself,’ she said in conclusion, ‘because I did not want my friend here to know how unfortunate my first experience of a journey alone had been, as it was made for her sake. When I go home I will tell everything to my father and mother.’

‘Why—knowing the material you had to deal with—why, in Heaven’s name, did you not send the wretched thing by a messenger?’ burst out Sir Edric.

‘I only thought of what was safest—and—of course I was not afraid,’ she replied simply, rearing her proud little head as she spoke. ‘And now I will go.’

Mrs. Mallory sprang forward.

‘Bernard,’ she ejaculated, ‘you are not going to allow this! And you—to Sir Edric—‘you, a magistrate! It is conniving at—’

‘Nora,’ shouted her husband, ‘are you *mad*?’

Cecil crossed the hall straight towards the entrance. She did not see that she was followed—and by her host. He opened the door himself and stood beside it.

‘May I not,’ he began, in such painful agitation that the girl’s kind heart was touched, ‘may I not beg you, entreat you, to—to try to forget it? That it happened in my house is enough to make me hate the place for ever. We may never meet again, but will you not let me say how I admire you—your courage, your—’

‘Thank you,’ she said. ‘It was not your fault, I know,’ and with a sudden impulse of generous pity she held out her hand.

He touched it for an instant, as if it was that of an empress bestowing pardon.

The Darting Hunt Ball was to be a very good one that year. Chilly and raw as was the weather, frost had as yet held off, and the neighbourhood was full of the devotees of fox-hunting. All the houses, big and little, which were ever let for the winter

season had been taken ; the great residents had found no difficulty in arranging their house-parties.

Mallory was overflowing with guests, and Mrs. Bernard Mallory, whom Sir Edric could not in common courtesy to his cousin have refrained from inviting to do the honours for him, was in the seventh heaven of self-important delight. What had passed between her husband and herself with regard to her outrageous behaviour to their young fellow-traveller had never transpired. For a day or two she had been somewhat subdued in manner, and increasingly deferential to Sir Edric ; and as she had really seen too little of him to know that the almost freezing politeness with which he treated her was not his usual and natural bearing, she grew by degrees comfortably satisfied that he had forgotten the disagreeable episode—nay, not improbably, that in his heart he considered that she had been all along in the right !

‘ Men never like to be put in the wrong, you know,’ she observed shrewdly to Miss Prissy, ‘ so I don’t wonder Teddy avoids the subject, otherwise I would have told him that the money was quite correct. None had been taken. “ Miss Wood ”—what a common name ! Most likely she chose it on purpose. I don’t suppose for an instant it was her real name—Miss Wood must have really got frightened and conscience-stricken.’

But Priscilla Mallory received her sister-in-law’s confidences unwillingly.

‘ For goodness’ sake, Nora,’ she said uneasily, ‘ leave the subject. I cannot endure the thought of it, and—I have now and then a nervous dread that we have not heard the last of it.’

‘ What on earth do you mean ? ’ asked Mrs. Bernard.

‘ Oh,’ Prissy replied, ‘ I—I daresay it is all my fancy, but do you know, Nora, when we were driving home the other day—the day of the meet we could not go to, you remember—I had an idea that I saw *her*—Miss Wood—in a pony-cart.’

‘ Well, and what if you did ? Governesses often drive about in carts,’ replied Nora, scornfully.

‘ But supposing—supposing she is in some very *good* family in the neighbourhood, and that she told the story and it *got about*,’ said Priscilla, lowering her tone.

‘ My dear Prissy,’ exclaimed her sister-in-law, ‘ how ridiculous you are ! What if it did get about ? If she told such a disgraceful story against herself, she would find herself sent to the rightabout. The girl would not be so mad. The only thing I feel ashamed of is the having let her off as easily as we did.’

But Priscilla said nothing.

A large party went to the ball from Mallory Park. Mrs. Bernard Mallory was resplendent; with certain people her loud, rather boisterous gaiety passed muster as exuberant good-nature, and her vanity being excessive, for the moment the good-nature was genuine.

She had danced once or twice, and the room was filling fast, when a chance remark from her partner infused one drop of gall into her cup of triumph.

'The Darting Manor people are late this evening,' he said. 'They are not a very large party, on account of Lady Frances not being quite well again yet. I fear she will have to go abroad after all. Have you seen her lately?'

Mrs. Bernard Mallory murmured something indefinite—Lady Frances Greatorex was almost the only neighbour of any standing who had not called upon her.

'I am anxious to meet one of their guests,' the young man went on. 'A daughter of Lord Mavor's is staying at the Manor. They are cousins, you know. This girl is charming. I was introduced to her in the summer, and she dances exquisitely. She is the only daughter, Cecil W——.'

But at that instant something caught his attention, and being rather a rattle, his sentence was never completed.

Nora's wits set to work on the problem of how to make Lady Frances's acquaintance.

'If Teddy would but give a dance,' she thought, 'she would have to call on me. I do hope no one will find out I don't know her. I must get Prissy to point her out.'

And she turned to look for her sister-in-law. She had not long to wait; as if conscious of her wish, almost at the same moment Miss Priscilla made her appearance, hurrying towards her as fast as the crowded room would allow. But what was the matter? Prissy looked strangely pale. Surely she was not going to faint or any nonsense like that, and spoil all their pleasure?

'Nora,' she whispered, as soon as she was within hearing, 'come aside somewhere with me. I have something very particular to say to you.'

Half alarmed, half annoyed, Mrs. Bernard Mallory followed her to a quiet corner.

'Nora,' gasped the poor woman, suffering vicariously for what she at least was entirely innocent of, 'Nora, I have just seen—

the Darting Manor party ; they came while the last dance was going on. And—who do you think is with them ?'

Nora's eyes opened to their widest.

' How should I know ? What are you talking about ? ' she replied querulously.

' It is—that girl—the girl you insulted so. What *shall* we do ? '

' The governess ! ' exclaimed Nora, though she grew perceptibly paler. ' What *are* they thinking of ? '

' *Governess, nonsense,*' said patient Prissy, losing her temper at last. ' That was only your absurd fancy. She is—do you hear me, Nora ?—she is Miss Wode—W O D E—Lord Mavor's daughter. Cecil Wode, whom everyone thinks so lovely, and *everyone* knows that the Mavors are perfect models of goodness and excellence.'

Nora caught hold of the back of a chair.

' Prissy,' she said, ' help me to go home. Say I have fainted, or—or anything you like.'

Poor woman ! No ' saying ' was necessary, for as she spoke the fainting very nearly became a fact, and she fell back all but unconscious in the chair beside her. And at that instant a girl, on the arm of her host and partner, Mr. Greatorex, of Darting, entered the room. It was Cecil Wode.

' What is the matter ? ' she exclaimed. ' Oh, she has only fainted. No, no,' as she put aside poor Prissy and her well-meant but clumsy efforts, ' not like that. Don't try to prop her up. Lay her quite flat. I will see to her.'

And when Nora came to herself, the face bending over her seemed indeed like that of an avenging angel.

But in reply to her whispered tremulous attempt at apology and gratitude came some words which were her best restorative.

' I know you must be sorry. I have told no one, for—for your family's sake. And I *promise* you never to tell any one.'

Mrs. Bernard Mallory did not stay as late as she had intended, but she recovered herself sufficiently to return to the dancing-room, where she sat quietly in a corner on the plea of not feeling well. And she certainly looked very pale.

Words would fail me to describe Sir Edric's sensations when, standing beside his cousin's wife, and addressing her with evident friendliness, he recognised—Miss Wood !

Later in the evening he found himself being introduced to

her, and meeting no resentment in her eyes, he ventured to ask her for a dance.

What passed between them during that dance with regard to the painful story Cecil had so generously promised to bury for ever concerns us not.

'Try to be sorry for her, do—for—for *my* sake, may I say?' were Miss Wode's last words.

Some few months later a passing sensation was created in the world of 'society' by the announcement of the engagement of Edric Mallory and Cecil Wode. It was not a very brilliant marriage for the only child and heiress of Lord Mavor, but it proved to be, in the best sense of the word, a happy one—which surely is far better?

Sir Edric had found his pearl—thanks to a ridiculous little sealskin purse.

LOUISA MOLESWORTH.

## Runawayes Eyes.

### A SHAKESPEARE NOTE.

I DO not propose to add another to the various emendations of the difficult word *run-awayes* in Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet,' III. ii. 6. The list of these is already long enough, not to say too long. It includes some sensible, but more nonsensical suggestions, and fairly illustrates both the acuteness and the folly that have spent themselves on Shakespeare's text. Amongst the variations or substitutes that have been proposed are *runagates*, *unawares*, *rude day's*, *Luna's*, *Rumour's*, *rumourer's*, *roving*, *enemy's*, *sunny day's*, *yonder eyes*. 'The poet's words,' confidently says yet another gentleman, 'were certainly these: *sun awake's eyes*'; to whom we may as confidently reply, the poet's words were certainly not those. On the whole, it is clearly best to take the text as it stands, as many good scholars have been content to do. The earliest copies show no important difference. The First Folio reads *run-awayes*, so Quartos 4 and 5; the Second and Third *run-awayes*; Quartos 2 and 3 have *runnawayes*.

Neither do I propose to add another to the various explanations that have been advanced by those who have accepted the reading 'runawayes.' More or less ingeniously it has been taken to mean the stars, the sun, Cupid, night, Juliet herself; and also, more obviously, as equivalent to *runagates*, *gadabouts*, or *vagabonds*. This last interpretation, adopted by many good scholars, certainly seems to have the support of the context; and the design of this short paper is merely to offer some slight illustrations of it. The lines that concern us are these:

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That runawayes eyes may wink, and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.

Surely the words 'untalked of and unseen' show that by the much-disputed word in the preceding line is meant some spying

busybody, some tale-telling lounger, some impertinent tattler, who, if the night were clear, would mark the lover making for his love, and officially report what he had seen up and down the town. In Musæus' 'Hero and Leander,' where Leander is pleading for his mistress's grace, she answers that his visits, should she allow them, could not be kept hid—that the world would be sure to hear of them :

ἢν δὲ θελήσῃς  
ώς ξεῖνος πολύφοιτος ἐμὴν ἐς πατρίδα μέμνειν,  
οὐ δύνασαι σκοτεόσπιν ὑποκλέπτειν Ἀφροδίτην·  
γλώσσα γάρ ἀνθρώπων φιλοκέρομος· ἐν δὲ σιωπῇ  
ἔργον ὅπερ τελέει τις, ἐνὶ τριόδοισιν ἀκούει.

Some idling and malicious stroller would penetrate their mystery, and what was done in secret would be proclaimed on the house-tops. To quote the line with which the *Eton Latin Grammar* first made many of us acquainted :

Percontatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est.

A highly pertinent phrase is 'love's spies' in the well-known old song of 'Bessie Bell.' Says Dameatas, urging his suit :

Deere art to me as thy geere's to thee;  
The wvard will never suspect us;  
This place it is private, 'tis folly to drive it;  
Love's spies have no eyes to detect us.

So the term 'Janglers' in Henryson's 'Robin and Makyne' :

Makyne, the nicht is soft and dry,  
The wether warm and fair,  
And the grene wod richt neir hand by  
To walk attowre all where.  
There may nae Janglers us espy,  
That is to Luve contrair;  
Therein, Makyne, baith you and I  
Unseen may mak repair.

Keats means much the same thing when, in 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' he describes Angela, leading Porphyro to Madeline's chamber, as

Aghast  
From fright of dim espial.

And perhaps Catullus's 'malus' may be here mentioned—the ill-natured one who may hear with envy the vast total of kisses that Lesbia and the poet have given each other :

Dein, quam millia multa feerimus,  
 Conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,  
 Aut ne quis malus invidere possit,  
 Quum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

Juliet's fear is natural enough. Some scandalmongering Montagu might be hovering around the premises as her bridegroom drew near. By night and day Paul Prys and Peeping Toms, and such gentry, are hanging about the streets, prowling quidnuncs, self-appointed inquisitors, indefatigable gossips, zealous eavesdroppers, listening and peeping and sneaking. Such persons the Greeks called *ἀρυπάτοι*, market-place fellows, because they lounged or 'loafed' about the *agora*. The Romans have a corresponding term in *surrostrami*. Evidently, if 'runawayes' can denote this species of creature, it would make capital sense in the speech of Juliet that concerns us.

But the illustration to which I wish now to call special attention is to be found in Spenser's 'Epithalamion.' This is of particular interest, because it is just possible Shakespeare may have been familiar with it, or Spenser may have been familiar with the Shakespearian passage. At all events, the 'Epithalamion' and 'Romeo and Juliet' are of about the same date. It is fairly certain that the 'Epithalamion' was written in the early summer of 1594, and it is almost certain that Spenser was married in the June of that year. It was entered in the Stationers' Registers in November 1594; it was published in 1595. The exact date of the composition of 'Romeo and Juliet' is not ascertainable. There is undoubtedly some very early work in it; there is undoubtedly much of a maturer and more exquisite quality. Probably enough, it was in or about 1595 that it assumed its present form, although it was not so printed till 1599. Thus the two works are very closely synchronous. The resemblance between the passages that are before us is surely striking. These are Spenser's lines—he, like Juliet, is apostrophising Night :

Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,  
 That no man may us see ;  
 And in thy sable mantle us enwrap  
 From fear of peril and foul horror free.

'That no man may us see' seems exactly to equate 'that runawayes eyes may wink.' Since myself noticing this parallelism, I have found from Mr. Furness's invaluable edition of 'Romeo and Juliet' that it has been observed by Dr. Tycho

Mommsen in his edition of the play ('Prolégomena,' p. 124, 1859). Mommsen speaks of Spenser's words as 'undoubtedly floating through the mind of the poet and tripping on all tongues since 1595.' And yet he prefers the reading 'enemies' to 'runawayes.' But the reading 'runawayes,' if it can be taken to mean 'gadabouts,' would correspond better with Spenser's 'man' than would 'enemies.'

And now as to this word 'runawayes.' First, let me remark, it probably ought to be printed in our modern English 'runaways,' not 'runaway's'; that is, it should be parsed as a gen. pl. In the next place, it is, I believe, in the sense we are considering a *ἀπαξ λεγόμενον*, not only in Shakespeare, but in English literature. It must be remembered, however, that this is not a fatal fact; there are analogous cases. And the question rather to be asked is, whether there is any internal reason why it should not bear the meaning we have in view. Now *away* in our language, besides signifying 'from' or 'off,' signifies also vigorously, incessantly. Observe the colloquial phrases, 'he talked *away*,' 'fire *away*,' &c. And so a 'runaway' might well denote not only a fugitive, as of course it commonly does, but also one that is perpetually running, that is always a-foot, that runs to and fro. (See in A.V. Daniel xii. 4, and the opening verse of chapter v. of Jeremiah: 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.') It is undeniable that 'away' in *runaway* might have such a force. And if the word is not actually found elsewhere with such a meaning, it is certainly found in combinations that suggest it, and certainly there are kindred formations that countenance it. Thus King Richard III., V. iii. 315.

Remember whom you are to cope withal :  
 A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and *runawayes*,  
 A scum of Britons, and base lackey peasants,  
 Whom their o'ercharged country vomits forth  
 To desperate ventures and assured destruction.

Langland makes Piers the Ploughman say :

*Ac Robert renne-aboute shal nowȝte haue of myne.*

Bale speaking of 'Sir Reynold Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, Sir John Ball, &c., priests,' says the 'most ragged *runagate*

and idle idiot among them is no less than a Sir, which is a lord in Latin, as Sir John,' &c. ('Image of Both Churches,' *apud Acad.*, February 7, 1874). The author of *Remedies against Discontentment*, 1596, thus happily portrays just such persons as are in Juliet's mind :—

' There are another sort of men . . . who can never stand still nor stay in one place; they never cease going and coming; they intermeddle themselves in every man's matter without any entreaty; they are wonderfully troubled with business, and yet they have nothing at all to do. When they come abroad, if you demand of them whither they go, they straightways make answer I know not, I have some business like as others have. *They run about the streets and market-places*, and return all weary and disquieted, having dispatched nothing at all. . . . They go with such random that they carry all that they meet before them. The Exchange, Paul's, and the market-places are ordinarily full of such men. These forge and invent news, are deceivers, talking still of men's lives, and discoursing vainly what charges and offices other men have.'

Hunter, who understood *runaways* in the sense adopted in this paper, pointed out a late authority for it in *Dyche's Dictionary*, 1735: 'Runagate or Runaway, a rover, a wanderer.'

JOHN W. HALES.

## *An Eighteenth-Century Friendship.*

IT would be an interesting inquiry, and not an uninstructive one, to examine into the lives and deaths of friendships, by collecting evidence, comparing one with another, and collating statistics, to discover their average length of days, the circumstances which tend to shorten or prolong the terms of their existence, the diseases to which they are subject, the causes that most frequently prove fatal to them, the manner in which they depart this life, and lastly—not least in importance—the fashion of their burial.

It is a fact that must be frankly confessed that it is not by the ‘visitation of God’ that all, or even, one fears, most friendships perish. Lifelong friendships, friendships that are found by death, when it comes, unimpaired, do indeed exist—it were faithless and ungrateful to deny it—but surely it is no less true, if a truth less creditable to human nature, that many, if not the majority, are hardly more than episodes, long or short, important or trifling, in the lives which they affect.

It could scarcely indeed be otherwise, human nature being what it has proved itself, rash in entering upon such relationships—in building the tower without counting the cost—and fickle in repudiating them; but even setting aside such natural causes, how many perils and dangers of other kinds beset a friendship, dangers for which no one is to blame, perils which are nobody’s fault, which are merely the inevitable result of time and the changes which time brings with it; how many storms must be weathered if the vessel—often not more than a pleasure-boat, manned for fair weather—is to escape the destruction that awaits it.

But the age of miracles is not yet past, and there are still found bonds, uncemented by ties of blood or kinship, and unprotected by the legal guarantees with which it has been found by universal consent necessary to fence about other unions, which do

nevertheless escape the perils of the way, and emerge triumphant from the dangers by which they have been environed. But, again, it must be repeated, these are the exceptions which prove the rule.

An inquiry, however, which should deal with the whole subject would be too wide a one, covering, as it would do, in its direct and side issues, not a small portion of the area of human life. It is with a more limited subject—with a single friendship, that is, and one typical rather of a past than of the present generation—that we are now concerned, a friendship which has already lain in its grave more than a century, and which, distinguished from others of its kind more by the sort of brutal candour with which the changes and chances that befell it are unveiled for the edification of the student than by any other inherent quality, may serve as a fair example of the class to which it belonged—possibly as a warning.

It is a friendship between a man and a woman, of the intellectual rather than the sentimental type, but into which we cannot but detect the intrusion, on the woman's part at least, of an admixture of sentiments of a more dangerous and fermenting nature. Such accidents are the tax which, on one side or the other, is not infrequently levied upon such relationships, and to which the bitterness and acerbity which, in the case in question, marked some of its stages may not unfairly be ascribed.

Mrs. Inchbald was already in her fortieth year—an age at which, if ever, such a friendship might be considered safe from disturbing elements—when she appears to have first crossed the path of William Godwin, himself two or three years younger. Both were, in the eyes of their contemporaries as well as in their own, noticeable figures. It is from different causes that individuals are singled out for distinction in their own time and are held in remembrance by those who come after. In the case of the majority it is for what they have done, in consideration of some monument, of whatever kind, that they have left behind, with their name thereto affixed, as a bequest to posterity. But in other, though more uncommon instances, their performances have little to do with the matter. The immortality of this second class—that precarious and provisional immortality conferred by their fellow-men—is due, not to the tangible results of their labours or of their genius, but to a personality strong enough to print itself upon their age and make them stand out, living and individual figures, upon the comparatively colourless background of their contemporaries.

raries, so that they continue, after they have passed away, to form a feature of the age to which they belong, which catches and compels the attention of those who look back. Thus was it with Mrs. Inchbald. It is not now chiefly as the writer of a score of forgotten plays, as the second-rate actress, or even as the authoress of *A Simple Story*, the most successful of her literary achievements, that she attracts our interest, but as the farmer's daughter who, coming to London in her early girlhood to seek her future, unfriended and alone, succeeded in finding it ; whose robust common-sense carried her unharmed through the perilous adventures which marked the launching of her bark in London life ; as the only authoress in whose society Sheridan declared himself to find pleasure ; who, wherever she made her appearance, is said to have become at once the centre of the circle which she entered ; in whom the author of *Political Justice* found the 'mixture of the milkmaid and the lady so piquante' ; whose figure, now vanished from the world's stage for more than seventy years, still stands out, in bold and striking relief, even from a society in which individualities were more than usually pronounced.

There, in the picture-gallery of the last century, for to that century she belongs, though her life extended nearly twenty years beyond its close, her portrait confronts us, sketched by her own hand and that of her contemporaries, boldly outlined, vivid and clear, somewhat deficient in delicacy and grace, blemished here and there by touches of vulgarity and coarseness ; to speak truth, a not altogether pleasant and yet most individual feature in the group to which she belongs ; made up of incongruous virtues and inharmonious foibles, full—as she is set before us by the daughter of her friend—of contrasts and inconsistencies, her spirit of adventure bridled by a saving grace of self-command ; at once penurious and generous, susceptible and emotional, yet guarding herself successfully against passion ; kind-hearted, yet with a bitter tongue and an envenomed pen that we cannot but feel must have gone far to counteract the effects of her practical good-nature ; and combining, as years went by, with the frank and hardy egoism which had been the earlier attitude in which she faced the world, a prudent pharisaism which is perhaps the most incongruous and unattractive trait her character presents. It is pleasanter to view her as the reckless adventuress, bold, eager, ambitious, vain, rashly confident one day, at starvation point the next, indiscreet in her friendships and prompt in her compunction, than as she appears later on

when prosperity and success have invested her with the sober garb of a responsible respectability which is the least pleasing of its kind—with a reputation, social and literary, of which, as a newly-acquired possession, it behoves her to be careful, and which she declines to imperil by extending the hand of fellowship to those who have been more rash or less fortunate in their ventures than herself.

It was at this later period of her life, when she was doubtless engaged, as her biographer graphically expressed it, in cultivating her literary talents and in investing her gains in the Funds ; when, according to the same authority, ‘coronets were seen waiting at the door of her lodgings to bear her from household toil to take the airing of luxury and pride,’ that she became acquainted with Godwin. Her wild oats had long been sown. Twenty-one years had elapsed since she had quitted her mother’s home, intending, with the magnificent optimism of seventeen, and in spite of the impediment in her speech which, to a less sanguine spirit, might have appeared an insuperable obstacle to her scheme, to make herself a name and carve herself out a career on the stage. Over, too, were the adventurous years which had followed, together with the days when, married to the second-rate actor who had rescued her from the obvious dangers incident to the life which she had chosen, she had ‘starved, feasted, despaired, been happy.’ Poor Inchbald, with his not altogether unreasonable jealousies, his sanguine hopes and unfulfilled anticipations, his visions, by means of the French acquired by a few lessons, of taking a Parisian audience by storm, while his wife should achieve a corresponding success in literary and social circles—poor Inchbald had been many years in his grave ; whilst his widow, resigning herself, we feel sure, after a week of ‘grief, horror, and almost despair,’ to the inevitable, had, left to herself, made a far greater success of life than would have been possible to her weighted by his presence, and had achieved in the field of literature a triumph denied to her on the stage.

It was at this point in her career that the friendship was inaugurated of the vicissitudes of which the letters published in the life of William Godwin tell the tale, presenting us with the record, not indeed complete, but more candid than such chronicles are wont to be, of a not uninteresting chapter in human history.

In the autumn of 1792, when the acquaintance was formed, Godwin, though not yet at the height of his literary reputation,

was already well known in the world of letters. Two years earlier, although at the time a stranger to the authoress, he had read and reviewed *A Simple Story*, and the first letter we find is one in which Mrs. Inchbald recognises the tenderness and justice of the criticism passed by her new friend upon a tragedy from her pen.

During the next five years the friendship thus inaugurated seems to have run a prosperous course. There were frequent meetings and frequent interchange of letters. Godwin was a man to whom the society of women was a necessity, and who was peculiarly open to the species of flattery, in part literary, in part personal, which is an art at which they are commonly more adroit than men, or would it be more just to say that it is a cordial which each sex is best adapted to administer to the other? As we read Mrs. Inchbald's comments—they can scarcely be termed criticisms—upon his works, we are not surprised to find that his biographer considers that her friendship was 'a great comfort' to him at this period of his life.

\* 'God bless you!' she cries, when entrusted with the proof sheets of *Caleb Williams*, 'that was the sentence I exclaimed when I had read about half a page. . . . If you disappoint me you shall never hear the last of it, and instead of "God bless," I will vociferate "God ——n you."'

And a day or two later, writing of the same work, she says:

\* 'Your first volume is far inferior to the two last. Your second is sublimely horrible, captivatingly frightful. Your third is all a great genius can do to delight a great genius, and I never felt myself so conscious of, or so proud of giving proof of a good understanding as in pronouncing it to be a capital work.'

Thus the one great genius to the other! What author, philosopher though he might be, could fail to be touched by a like tribute? Eleven years later it will be necessary to quote another criticism, also from Mrs. Inchbald's pen. It is curious to compare the two. In these halcyon days even, when she presumes to suggest an improvement, it is with a smile at her own audacity. 'I wish,' she says, 'I could always write so excellently comic as when I undertake to dictate to you.'

But it is not always to the literary man that her letters are addressed.

'I have received,' she writes, 'a note this moment from a very Beautiful Lady, requiring I would direct it to you, as she does not know your address. I am afraid to send it by post for fear it

should fall into the hands of the Privy Council, who might not set a proper value upon it. I trust you will, for I assure you it contains her real sentiments.' And—Mrs. Inchbald will be at home all the following day, and Mr. Godwin had better call for her friend's tribute in person.

That she was exacting we can believe when we find her instructing Mr. Godwin, then and at all times overwhelmed with work, not to come and see her till he can pay her a visit of three hours' duration; but there is no evidence to indicate that it was not a tax he was ready and willing to meet. So far all had gone well—more than well—with the course of the friendship. But, no more than that of true love, was it destined to run smooth, and now came its first interruption. Godwin had been unmarried when Mrs. Inchbald had become acquainted with him, and had remained so for the five years which followed, during which we find no trace of a disagreement between them. But a change, vital in its nature, and, so far as the relationship between the two was concerned, disastrous in its effects, was about to take place. It was some months since he had first met Mary Wollstonecraft, and he had now determined to make her his wife. How the announcement was made to Mrs. Inchbald we have no means of knowing, but as to the manner of her reception of it we are not left in uncertainty.

Upon whatever woman his choice had fallen, Godwin's marriage would undoubtedly have been felt by her as a severe blow. Whether or not she would have desired to marry him herself, she was a woman in whom the possessive quality—always dangerous to the continuance of a friendship—was strongly developed; and she was far too astute and experienced in knowledge of the world to blind herself to the inevitable alteration in the existing relations between a man and a woman caused by the marriage of either. Henceforth she was well aware that, whether present in the body or not, there would always be a third person to be reckoned with, and that to herself it would be left for the future to take the lower place outside the sacred circle within which there is but room for two.

Mrs. Inchbald was not a woman to accept the situation meekly. 'In my religion,' she writes long afterwards to Godwin himself, not perhaps without a backward glance at the present time, 'in my religion we never trust secrets to a married man, and men make vows of celibacy on purpose to gain our confidence'—a singular method, by the way, of accounting for the vows of the

priesthood of the Catholic Church ; and Godwin having failed to prove himself ready to purchase the continuance of Mrs. Inchbald's confidence in the manner indicated, her own action in the matter was marked with her usual promptness and decision. Being a woman to whom, at least in the question at issue, no bread was plainly preferable to half a loaf, she at once decided to dispense with his friendship altogether rather than, acquiescing in the altered conditions under which it could alone continue, to accept that which it would be in his power for the future to offer.

'Two ladies,' says Mary Shelley, Godwin's daughter, in narrating the event, 'shed tears when he announced his marriage—Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Reveley.' Mrs. Inchbald did more. Availing herself, without remorse or compunction, of the first weapon supplied to her hand, she took the opportunity of insulting the woman who had become her friend's wife.

'I must sincerely wish you and Mrs. Godwin joy,' \* she writes, when the news of the marriage had reached her; 'but, assured that your joyfulness will obliterate from your memory every trifling engagement, I have entreated another person to supply your place and perform your office in securing a box on Reynolds' night. If I have done wrong, when you next marry I will act differently.'

And when Godwin, owing either to extraordinary obtuseness, or more probably to the singular and stubborn obstinacy characteristic of the man, persisted, in spite of the intimation that his presence was no longer desired, in presenting himself, together with his wife, in Mrs. Inchbald's box on the night in question, the latter went so far as to express her sentiments, in no ambiguous language, to the bride herself.

It does not surprise us, after this passage of arms, that during the brief period covered by Godwin's first marriage we find no record of further intercourse between Mrs. Inchbald and himself. It is a stranger fact—one, indeed, so astonishing that it is difficult, from the standpoint of ordinary human nature, to account for it—that on the very day of Mary Godwin's tragic and premature death he should be found appealing to his own former friend and to his wife's enemy for sympathy in his bereavement. The correspondence that follows indicates, so to speak, the high-water mark of interest attaching to the story. Of the friendship itself it marks the veritable close.

That Godwin should, after all that had passed, have turned to Mrs. Inchbald at what was probably the darkest hour in his life, is in itself the strongest proof that could be given of the strength

of the attachment which had survived the test to which she had already put it. In the letter, evidently written under the influence of strong feeling, in which he announces his wife's death, there is plainly discernible the desire, if not wholly to ignore the past, at least to pass it over as lightly as was compatible with loyalty to the dead. But Godwin, philosopher and student of human nature as he was, had mistaken the woman with whom he had to deal, and in the rapid interchange of well-directed fire that follows sharply upon the flag of truce we see reconciliation in any true sense rendered impossible, and the death-wound given to the friendship which, with a haste so strange and ill-judged, he had striven to renew. As letter follows letter, and we perceive the increasing rancour on either side, the venomous and vindictive passion with which the dead woman is pursued by her living rival, as Godwin, roused from the softened mood which had dictated his appeal to his former friend, and moved by her attack to responsive bitterness, finds time even at that moment to elaborate with careful and effective skill his deliberate indictment against his wife's assailant, we feel that Mary is avenged, that she has proved more powerful dead than living, and that in the grave to which she will presently be borne will also be buried the friendship—or all that was worth having of it—which once united, and might have united again, the man who had loved and the woman who had hated her.

\* 'My wife died at eight this morning,' Godwin writes. 'I always thought you used her ill, but I forgive you. You told me you did not know her. You have a thousand good and great qualities. She had a very deep-rooted admiration for you. Yours, with real honour and esteem, W. GODWIN.'

Among Mrs. Inchbald's good and great qualities, reverence towards the dead and forbearance towards the living were not included. Reading the letter with which she responded to his announcement, and making every allowance for the haste and agitation which is visible in it, we nevertheless cannot but feel that it is in moments such as these that the true woman betrays herself. 'Scratch the Russian and you will find the Tartar.' The veneer of civilisation has been applied, but it has gone no deeper than the surface. Mrs. Inchbald is still the same as when, more years ago than she would care to remember, she flung the dish of hot water in the face of a stage manager who had had the misfortune to offend her.

\* 'You have shocked me beyond expression,' she writes, 'yet,

I bless God, without exciting the smallest portion of remorse. Yet I feel delicately (!) on every subject in which the good or ill of my neighbour is involved.

'I did not know her. I never wished to know her. As I avoid every female acquaintance who has no husband, I avoided her. Against my desire you made us acquainted. With what justice I shunned her your present note evinces, for she judged me harshly. *She* first thought I used her ill, for you would not. . . . Be comforted. You *will* be comforted. Still I feel for you at present. Write to me again. Say what you please at such a time as this. I will excuse and pity you.'

And again the following day she takes up her pen. She has by this time recovered from the first hot indignation aroused in her, perhaps in equal measure, by Godwin's simultaneous charge and expression of forgiveness. Possibly, too, though too proud to say so, she does not feel altogether easy at the recollection of her own reply. At any rate, she now, in a cooler mood, offers him condolence, together with encouragement for the future, deduced from her own experience. She too had suffered and had recovered —more, had lived to think with indifference of what she had endured. With indifference, and possibly, as we cannot help suspecting, bearing in remembrance certain bickerings with poor Inchbald, lover and husband of her youth though he had been, not without an acknowledgment that Providence might have done wisely in removing him to another sphere. Another consolation, too, and a somewhat singular one, she offers:

\* 'You have been a most kind husband, I am told. Rejoice—the time *might* have come when you would have wept over her remains with compunction for cruelty to her. . . . I lament her as a person whom you loved. I am shocked at the unexpected death of one in such apparent vigour of mind and body, but I feel no concern for any regret she endured at parting from this world, for I believe she had tact and understanding to despise it heartily.'

But her *amende*, if as such was intended her tribute to the tact and wisdom which would have made Mary ready to quit a world which, with Mrs. Inchbald as its spokeswoman, had treated her so unmercifully, came too late. Two days later Godwin writes to substantiate the accusation she had so hotly resented, and this time in a tone which indicates clearly how deeply the insult to his wife had rankled:

\* 'I must endeavour to be understood,' he says, 'as to the un-

worthy behaviour with which I charge you towards my wife. I think your shuffling behaviour about the taking places to the comedy of the "Will" dishonourable to you. I think your conversation with her that night at the play base, cruel, and insulting. I think you know more of my wife than you are willing to acknowledge to yourself, and that you have an understanding capable of doing some small degree of justice to her merits. I think you should have had magnanimity and self-respect enough to have showed this. I think that while the Twisses and others were sacrificing to what they were silly enough to think a proper etiquette, a person so out of all comparison their superior as you are should have placed her pride in acting upon better principles, and in courting and distinguishing insulted greatness and worth, I think that you chose a mean and pitiful conduct, when you might have chosen a conduct that would have done you immortal honour. You had not even their excuse. They could not (they pretended) receive her into their previous circles. You kept no circle to debase and enslave you.

— 'I have now been full and explicit on the subject, and have done with it, I hope, for ever.

— 'I thank you for your attempt at consolation in your letter of yesterday. It was considerate and well-intended, although its consolations are utterly alien to my heart. W. GODWIN.'

But it is naturally the woman who has the last word.

\* 'I could refute every charge you allege against me in your letter,' Mrs. Inchbald answers, 'but I revere a man, either in deep love or deep grief; and as it is impossible to convince, I would at least say nothing to irritate him.'

'Yet surely thus much I may venture to add. As the short and very slight acquaintance I had with Mrs. Godwin, and into which I was reluctantly impelled by you, has been productive of petty suspicions and revilings (from which my character has been till now preserved), surely I cannot sufficiently applaud my own penetration in apprehending, and my own firmness in resisting, a longer and more familiar acquaintance.'

And a month later:

\* 'With the most sincere sympathy in all you have suffered—with the most perfect forgiveness of all you have said to me—there must nevertheless be an end to our acquaintance *for ever*. I respect *your prejudices*, but I also respect *my own*.

'E. INCHBALD.'

There is one reflection which is inevitably suggested by a perusal of this correspondence, namely, that should one great genius—to use Mrs. Inchbald's own expression—conceive itself to have cause of quarrel with another, especially where both are versed in the art of lending the fullest force to the expression of feeling, it is well that they should not quarrel on paper. The art of quarrelling well is at all times no easy one to acquire, but a dispute which is conducted on the most approved method, and in which the blows are each and all nicely calculated to find their way home to the most vulnerable points in the enemy's harness, though possibly admirable enough from the point of view of art and science, is apt to fail in paving the way, as a good quarrel between friends should do, to a more satisfactory adjustment of the relations between them, or, especially when the letters are preserved, in leaving a convenient loophole open for future reconciliation. In Godwin's last letter there were not wanting thrusts, veiled though they might be, which Mrs. Inchbald would find it hard to forgive and harder still to forget—notably the assertion that while others were to some degree justified in pleading their position in society as an excuse for their refusal to admit into their circles a woman with Mary Wollstonecraft's past history, Mrs. Inchbald had no such excuse, since *she* had no 'circle' from which to exclude her.

We are not surprised to find that the latter, violent and resentful as she was, declares the friendship to be at an end. We feel, indeed, that she is right—that the breach has become too wide to be repaired; and that, such being the case, it would have been well that intercourse between those who had been friends and could be friends no longer should cease.

Mrs. Inchbald, to do her justice, would have had it so. Her dramatic instinct, no doubt, no less than her theatrical training, taught her that it is contrary to the principles of true art that scenes on a lower level of emotion should be allowed to follow the catastrophe, and that, the climax having been reached, it was time that the curtain should fall.

But Godwin was of another mind. It is curious to find him, through the succeeding years, attempting, with patient and dogged pertinacity, to gather up the links that have been broken, and to reknit the ties that have been wrenched apart. Again and again he returns to the charge, and again and again he is repulsed. Mrs. Inchbald never wavers in the course she has laid down for herself, never evinces a sign of relenting. As an

acquaintance, as a comrade in the literary field, she has no objection to meet him, to associate with him, to seek his counsel and bestow her own ; but as the friend she has loved she will admit him to her intimacy no more. She has learnt to be careful.

\* 'While I retain the memory of all your good qualities,' she writes on one occasion when he had striven to shake her determination, 'I trust you will allow me not to forget your bad ones, but warily to guard against those painful and humiliating effects which the event of any singular circumstance might again produce.'

Even over her literary criticisms, frankly appreciative as they often are, a change has passed. The old enthusiasm, the glamour with which personal affection had once invested the philosopher, is gone, never to return. Whilst her admiration for the writer still continues, though in modified form, something not unlike contempt for the man makes itself felt, now piercing through her praise, now finding vent in covert sarcasms. Thus, on one occasion she blames him for taking the public unnecessarily into his confidence as to a change in his opinions: 'Let the readers wonder at the writer's art,' she advises, 'rather than at his *inconstancy*. . . . Let them merely talk of your different productions under the title of "Godwin's Head" and "Godwin's Heart." ' While a little later on she offers him her somewhat equivocal congratulations upon having produced a tragedy which will hand him down to posterity 'among the honoured few who, during the present century, have totally failed in writing for the stage.'

It is curiously illustrative of the confidence which, in spite of the breach between them, Mrs. Inchbald still retained not only in his literary judgment, but in his sense of honour, that, while still inexorable in her refusal to renew the old friendly relationship, we find her soliciting his opinion upon a matter which so intimately concerned herself as her own autobiography—a work subsequently destroyed at the instigation of her director. Even the fact that the MS. has been entrusted to him is to remain a secret between them, and it is clear that she awaits his sentence upon it as a matter of life and death importance and with breathless anxiety. 'I am so ashamed of it,' she writes, after begging that he would name an early day for the return of the MS.; 'I am impatient to have it back—and yet I am so fond of it, I am in terror lest *fire* or some other accident should destroy it while from under my protection. And if it should ever be published, perhaps I shall wish a thousand times it had been burnt. . . . Independently of my reputation as a woman, do you

think as a writer I should be more or less esteemed by this publication?' And again, when Godwin, whom she had implored to mark the 'disgusting as well as the dull parts,' ventures to suggest some curtailment, she replies that while no one can acknowledge the efficacy of compression more than herself, 'in the present production (where my real feelings only—no cold, *correct*, imaginary ones—have been concerned) I am totally at a loss where to curtail.'

How completely she succeeded in separating the critic from the man is curiously shown by the fact that, while relentless in her determination to keep him personally at a distance, she should have placed in Godwin's hands a work concerning which she was herself torn by so many doubts, and of which the destruction was eventually decreed by the discretion of her confessor.

It is perhaps natural that a man who has read, admired, and criticised four volumes of manuscript should feel himself entitled to a reward. At all events it appears that, some months after the correspondence that has been thus cited, Godwin, presuming upon her readiness to meet him upon literary ground, ventured upon a final effort to induce Mrs. Inchbald to rescind the decree by which she had annulled the friendship between them. The answer, however, was sharp and decisive :

'I have a letter or two of yours in my possession,' she writes—Mrs. Inchbald, like Godwin himself, was careful to preserve her correspondence—'the contents of which I perfectly forgive and perfectly *excuse*, or I should have been the meanest of mortals to have asked a favour of you this spring. Still these letters must ever prevent any *premeditated* renewal of our personal acquaintance. My manners or my conversation so deceived you to my disadvantage, that I cannot knowingly and willingly risk the possibility of such another disgraceful mortification . . . while you are in the self-same *predicament*'—thus she characterises Godwin's second marriage—'which gave rise to your former error—the seeing through the eyes and feeling through the heart of another. I revere the passion which can blind you, and I revere blindness as the sole proof which can be given of the *genuine* passion; but so few men are gifted with refined sensibility like yours, that I have never yet been obliged to practice the art of pleasing them through those they love, and I dare not hazard the want of this power with you.'

Which pronouncement Godwin laid away with the rest of Mrs. Inchbald's letters, accepting it, we cannot but believe, as final.

And so, at length, the friendship is not only dead but buried. There are different modes of sepulture. Some nations were accustomed to embalm their dead and to preserve their mummies. It is a practice not yet wholly discontinued. Some, with less reverence, allow their bones to bleach above-ground. In the case of a friendship neither course is to be recommended, nor is any good purpose answered by the attempt to galvanise it, as Godwin would have done, to a show of life. Mrs. Inchbald was wiser. The shortest method, harsh as it seems, is, after all, the best. The spirit being gone, as we may hope, elsewhere, it is rank materialism to preserve the body which it has forsaken. Let it have speedy and decent burial, but—and in this we fancy Mrs. Inchbald would not agree—let it be given in silence. A panegyric over the grave of an outworn friendship would be, to say the least of it, out of place, but it is well to speak no harm of it either, since it is dead. The little French rhyme might fitly form its epitaph :

' La vie est brève :  
    Un peu d'amour,  
    Un peu de rêve,  
    Et puis—bonjour !

' La vie est vaine :  
    Un peu d'espoir,  
    Un peu de haine,  
    Et puis—bonsoir ! '

I. A. TAYLOR.

NOTE.—Letters marked with an asterisk are published in Mr. Kegan Paul's Life of Godwin.

## *Mrs. Juliet.*

BY MRS. ALFRED W. HUNT.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### A RUSÉ GIRL.

Tu proverai si come sa di sale  
 Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle  
 Lo scendere e il salir per l' altrui scale.  
*Divina Commedia.*

WHEN Aylesbury was gone, Mr. Gerard felt as if nothing but direct contact with Nature could relieve the tension which oppressed him. He went out, but where was Nature to be found? The sun was shining brightly, soft breezes were blowing, but whithersoever he looked nothing was to be seen but serried ranks of houses. There were cold stucco houses, and warm red brick ones, but always houses and nothing more. Had it not been for this there was something pleasant and exhilarating about the air, even to one who was country-born and bred. He was astonished at the clearness of the atmosphere, for he forgot that he was out before the kitchen fires were lighted. He reached a tract enlivened by the flowering shrubs which make London so charming in the month of May. Unconsciously to himself they were charming to him; indeed, he would have been almost happy if his mind had not been in such a turmoil. He felt no qualms about what he had done, so far as he himself was concerned. It was his bounden duty to perform any service, however onerous it might be, for his friend's son, and it was a duty to help all true lovers. His own married life had been so happy that there were few things that he would not have ventured on to insure similar happiness to those he loved. After he had walked by the park railings for some time, he came to one of the gates just as it was

being opened for the day. He went into the park and walked for an hour and a half, wondering what the future of the newly-married couple would be; resolving to help them; considering how best to do it; deeply regretting that in the hurry of Aylesbury's departure he had omitted to ask permission to impart the secret of the stolen marriage to his own wife. He could not do so now, and it would be the first secret he had ever kept from her. Then, again, he was vexed at his own stupidity in not accompanying that poor young fellow to the railway station. He was always thinking of things just too late. That is what he told himself, and it was true. Even at that very moment he was giving additional proof of its truth by entirely forgetting that he ought to go home if he wished to be in time for breakfast. Hunger had been asserting its presence for some time, but he disregarded all bodily feelings until at last he felt some pangs so sharp that he pulled out his watch. What he saw startled him. Mrs. Freeman's last words the night before had been, 'Our breakfast-hour is nine; we are obliged to be tolerably punctual on account of my husband's work.' It was now ten minutes past nine, and he was nearly a mile from home. He hurried back across the park, and when he reached the house, hastily removed his hat and great-coat, and went into the breakfast-room with many apologies. Everyone stared at him, not because he was so late, but because of the eccentricity of his dress. The excitement he had gone through had made him completely oblivious that he was still in evening-dress; he was just as he had dressed himself a few hours before when he had risen in such haste to perform that marriage ceremony.

'My dear Mr. Gerard!' exclaimed Mrs. Freeman, who, of course, knew nothing of this, and saw a tired, excited-looking, handsome old clergyman who had made an odd mistake when dressing, and did not seem to be in the least aware of it. He detected a look of surprise—a consciousness of something unusual in the faces of all—then an effort to hide it. Having said good-morning to him they began to talk to each other as if nothing had happened, but that strange glance they had cast on him as he had entered had unnerved him; they had looked on him as if he had done something wrong. Was everything known already? He anxiously looked round the table for Miss Juliet; her face would be a sure guide to him. Miss Juliet, or, as he was now in his own mind beginning to call her, Mrs. Juliet, was not there. That confirmed him in the suspicion that all was known; and

feeling wretchedly uncomfortable, he stood for a moment hesitating what to do.

'Do sit down, dear Mr. Gerard,' said his hostess.

'Come beside me,' cried Mrs. Cradock, kindly. 'We put you out, I know, by looking so surprised when you came in, but we didn't do it out of ill-nature, I assure you; it was just because you must have been a little absent when you were dressing. You have put on your evening clothes, that's all.'

Mr. Gerard hastily glanced at his coat; was it possible that he had been so stupid? Then, old as he was, he felt his cheeks tingle with a burning blush as the remembrance of the circumstances under which he had dressed forced its way vividly into his mind. 'You must be so kind as to forgive me,' he said. 'When I dressed I knew I was putting on my evening clothes. I got up in a great hurry, and put on the first things that came to hand. I was with poor Mr. Aylesbury before he left, and after that I went out to walk off the excitement of parting, and I stayed out too long, and forgot all about my clothes. I will go and dress properly now. I am very much ashamed of my stupidity.'

Of course they made him stay and eat his breakfast, during the course of which he heard that Miss Juliet was not able to come down, as she was suffering from a very severe headache. He was not surprised; the wonder would have been if she had escaped it.

Mrs. Cradock looked perfectly well; even good Mr. Gerard felt sorry that she was not suffering a little for her outbreak of the evening before. She was determined to make him eat a good breakfast. 'Take your time,' she said, when she was left alone with him. 'Eat your breakfast quietly, and I will try to amuse you while you are doing it. You saw Mr. Aylesbury off, you say; nice young man enough, I have no doubt, but I am glad he is gone!'

'You surprise me. I don't know when I have seen a young man I liked better.'

'That's what Juliet says, but I don't believe her. She only says that to blind me. Congreve is the one she has taken a fancy to; more's the pity!'

'I don't think you are right,' said Mr. Gerard, very imprudently.

Mrs. Cradock at once fixed a sharply interrogative eye on him,

and exclaimed, 'And what can you know of her heart? I tell you she is in love with Mr. Congreve.'

Mr. Gerard was amazed, first at the mistake she was making, secondly at her want of discretion in talking of this to him. She easily read his thoughts.

'You think it would be wiser of me to hold my tongue, and perhaps it would, but you see I have taken a fancy to you, and then I think you can help me. You must be so kind as to talk to her as a clergyman ought, and tell her not to waste her chances in life by frittering away her affections as she does. It is her duty to try to make a good marriage, and you must tell her so.'

'But I don't consider—'

'Let me finish. I am going to take a handsome house in London, and shall fill it with as many of the best people as I can get together; she shall have every chance of doing well; but if I behave like this to her, she must give up thinking of nondescripts—no more Congreves, or Aylesburys either.'

'Mr. Aylesbury is a young man whom no one—'

'You and I will never be friends if you don't agree with me. If Juliet wanted to marry either of the two I have named, I would turn her out of my house. I have the power, and I would use it. Aylesbury is gone, so we need not think of him, but I want you to talk to her about Congreve.'

'How can I?'

'You can do it at my request. I should think that my request is excuse enough. You will do it for me, won't you? I should like you to ask to see her as soon as her head is better. No time like the present. Besides, I am expecting an agent about the house; he may come this very morning, and I shall have to give him an answer. I must know how she intends to behave herself, for if I take a house in London, she must either make up her mind to leave me at once, or give up seeing Congreve.'

'She is too ill to see me to-day; besides—' 'Besides, I do not know her well enough,' he was about to say, but how could he say that after what had happened so recently?

'You are not sufficiently acquainted, you think,' remarked Mrs. Cradock, 'but she is dependent on me, and if I say you know her well enough, you do know her well enough. I particularly wish you to talk to her, for I believe you will do her some good. You have not opened your letter.'

'What letter?'

Mr. Gerard had never imagined that there could be a letter for him so soon. So soon! It seemed a month since he had left Limberthwaite, and yet his reason proclaimed that it was but twenty-four hours. There was a letter from his wife, and a box of sweet white violets.

'Will you take them to Miss Juliet?' said he, hoping she would go and leave him to enjoy his letter in peace. 'Will you give them to her, and say how sorry I am that she has a headache?'

'Yes, and I will let her know that you are coming to pay her a visit when she gets up.'

'Oh, don't be in a hurry about that when she is so ill.'

'I don't suppose she is particularly ill—anyhow, she can see you.'

He went to his own room, dressed himself leisurely, and then sat down to answer his wife's letter. He did not encounter Mrs. Cradock again for a couple of hours; then she said:

'Juliet is up now, and lying on the sofa in the small drawing-room. She says she is quite well enough to see you; at least, she said something civiller than that, but never mind. I begin to think she is ill. I told her that you had come down to breakfast in evening-dress, and I am sure she would have been amused if she had been well. She never smiled at all.'

'Poor girl, was she likely to smile?' thought Mr. Gerard. 'Did she show any inclination to see me?' he inquired.

'Yes, she seemed quite anxious about it; but that's her way—it always was. I understood what she was doing in a moment.'

'What was she doing?'

'She has guessed that I have asked you to lecture her, and wants me to think that she rather likes it. She think it makes her look innocent. I know her ways, she never by any chance deceives me!'

Mrs. Cradock's cunning was always blinding her eyes and darkening her understanding.

'I had better go at once,' he said; he was longing to comfort the sorrowing girl upstairs. 'I know the way, thank you,' for Mrs. Cradock seemed to be following him.

'Oh, I am sure you don't. How can you? You have not been in the small drawing-room yet.'

'In the small drawing-room!' exclaimed Mr. Gerard. If she did but know how and when he had become acquainted with that room!

'What a tell-tale face you have! The moment I named the small drawing-room I could see by your face that you did not know it. I shall have to come too. You and Juliet have no secrets, and you need not lecture her unless the agent comes.'

No secrets! Was the rest of his life going to be like this—one perpetual struggle with conscience?

They went upstairs together, and all that he could do was to cast glances of pity and sympathy at Juliet, doubting all the while whether she who was manifestly as ill as she professed to be was conscious of them. He tried to say words which would sound mere ordinary commonplace of consolation, and yet convey comfort and hope. Mrs. Cradock, however, would not allow much conversation of this kind to go on. She always insisted on playing the first part.

'Mr. Belper wishes to see you, ma'am,' said a servant after some time to Mrs. Cradock.

'Oh, here is that house agent; so they are willing to take my offer, and I shall have to make up my mind. Well, then, dear Mr. Gerard, I shall have to trouble you to carry out our intention, and have that little conversation with my niece. I must know what promise she will give.'

Mrs. Cradock did not seem to observe that she herself was performing the duty that she had assigned to Mr. Gerard. He remarked it with delight; he had accepted the task hoping to spare Juliet a more direct attack, but could not help feeling that if he spoke to her on such a subject it would be an unwarrantable intrusion.

'What do you want me to do, aunt?' said Juliet, looking uneasily at Mrs. Cradock's hard face. 'Tell me what you wish—don't mind saying it before Mr. Gerard.'

Mr. Gerard was becoming used to being the confidant of both parties.

'Mr. Belper has come about the house in Berkeley Square. It is a very handsome house, as you know, Juliet; it is furnished handsomely, and all ready for us to step into at a day's notice, but I shall not take it; at least, I shall not take you into it if it is to be the means of enabling undeserving persons to pay court to you.'

'I shall be much obliged to you, aunt,' said Juliet, and her voice sounded almost stern, 'if you will say who these undeserving persons who cause you so much alarm are. I think I know, but say it before Mr. Gerard.'

'Yes, you know. It is Mr. Congreve whom I object to most.'

'But I promised last night never to speak to him unless you were by my side. Have you forgotten?'

'No, but I thought you might as well repeat that promise before a witness.'

'I do repeat it; I give you my solemn promise.'

'But that is not enough,' said Mrs. Cradock, gathering new strength. 'I should like you to cut him without assigning any reason.'

'Impossible, after I have been friends with him so long. It would be too hard—too unfeeling! I promise you to pass him with a bow if I meet him out of doors; if he tries to stop me I will not stay to talk to him, and I will do the same if I meet him in society. What can I do more?'

'You can do nothing more,' interposed Mr. Gerard, who had his own reasons for believing that Mrs. Cradock was disquieting herself without a cause; 'Miss Juliet can do no more, but you, Mrs. Cradock, can so easily forbid the young man either to come to the house or prosecute the acquaintance.'

'I? But I don't want to incur his enmity. He might put me in *Punch*! Mr. Gerard, you seem quite to forget that this young man is a writer: he might hold me up to ridicule on the stage, or mock me in some of the papers—not for worlds would I offend him openly! Come, Juliet, decide; it is such a good house, I'd like to take it.'

'Then go to Mr. Belper and say that you will have it. I will do whatever you wish short of cutting Mr. Congreve altogether. Surely promising never to see him or talk to him alone is enough.'

'Yes, it is enough if you keep to it, but I am so afraid of your creeping out of it somehow.'

'Oh, Mrs. Cradock!' exclaimed Mr. Gerard, who was inexpressibly shocked.

Mrs. Cradock rose to go to the agent; for once she was rather ashamed of herself.

When the door had closed on her, Juliet said, 'Now, Mr. Gerard, you will, I think, be partly able to understand why I consented to what must have seemed so strange to you. I only hope I did right. It will be a terrible thing if what was done to save us from anxiety gives us all a double portion of it.'

'It won't, and there must be a great deal of happiness in knowing that he who loves you is your own.'

She sighed, and said, 'But there is the miserable dread of what may happen. I have been reading the newspapers, and though they do talk so jauntily, they make me quite miserable. I shall have to find some work to do—hard work if possible—anything to stop me thinking. Yesterday I was a girl—my only trouble was being fretted by my aunt and her ways. To-day I am a woman, and feel as if the most precious gift in the world had been bestowed on me, but that everything that lies in wait to cut life short was struggling to take it from me. If I were but going out to India with him I should not be half so unhappy, for, perhaps, I might be able to see him sometimes and assure myself that he was still safe; but to live here, and go about my foolish little daily occupations, conscious all the while that perhaps at the very time when I am loving him the most, and finding most happiness in his love, he has ceased to be able to feel that or anything else. I know it is foolish to have these thoughts, but if I am beginning to have them already, when he has not even left England, what shall I do when he is face to face with danger, and—?' but she could say no more.

'My dear child,' said Mr. Gerard, 'England's sons have to go and fight for her, and England's daughters must play their part too. In my estimation, their part requires the most courage. They must bear up bravely, and hope, and pray. Consider how many who go return unharmed to those whom they love, how very few lose their lives, either by war or pestilence. Why should the man you love be one of the unlucky ones?'

'Just because I do love him,' said Juliet, 'and because he had a presentiment of evil—he had a presentiment that he would never come back.'

'Then be quite happy!' exclaimed Mr. Gerard, affecting a light-heartedness he by no means felt. 'There is nothing so good to take out of the country with you as a presentiment of that kind. It is as good as taking out an umbrella on a doubtful day. You have no rain if you do. I am so glad he had that presentiment, and he told me that he was going to make his will—that's another safeguard. If you order up a lamp on a foggy day, the fog clears off in a moment or two, and if you make your will and are prepared to die, all dangers disperse, and you generally live to an extreme old age.'

Juliet tried to smile, but could not.

'And there are higher and surer grounds of comfort,' the old man continued. 'Your husband is in God's hands, dear; trust him to them.'

'I could do it so much better if I didn't love him so,' said poor Juliet. 'But I will try to be brave, and I know I need not think of dreadful things just yet. Does it not seem almost tragically comic that while I am tormenting myself about this, my poor aunt should be tormenting herself and me about another man? I don't want to do anything rude to Mr. Congreve, and I neither like hurting his feelings, nor letting him see that my aunt has been talking to me about him.'

'I have taken the house, Juliet; we can take possession of it when we like; I am so pleased it is settled,' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock, suddenly reappearing. 'Juliet, I wish you were well enough to go to Berkeley Square with me now. Do you think you can come? I shall want help, for after all I find I shall have to get some furniture.'

Before Juliet could reply, Mr. Gerard hastened to say, 'Will you let me go with you? I should so like to see your house, and be able to describe it to my wife.'

'Your dear wife shall see it for herself. I have made up my mind that she shall be a frequent visitor in it. She must come as soon as I am settled. Lie still, Juliet, and do see if you can't cure that head of yours. Come, Mr. Gerard—but stop, we may as well have our luncheon first.'

'Well, what success have you had with Juliet?' inquired Mrs. Cradock, as soon as they were on their way to the new house.

'She consents to whatever you may wish, but hopes you will not ask her to do anything very extreme.'

'And I suppose you think that she means to be bound by that?'

'Yes; don't you?'

'Certainly not. Juliet is a very *rosy* girl. She is not willing to drop his acquaintance, and, what's more, she won't. If you happen to be in town in two months' time you will see that, somehow or other, she is as good friends with him as ever.'

'Oh, I scarcely think that; you are doing her injustice.'

'Wait awhile, and you will see for yourself. I say that she does not intend to give him up; you say she does; but I am the one who will turn out to be right.'

Mr. Gerard did not believe this, but her words gave him food

for thought. She did not leave him time to indulge in it, and said, 'I don't know how it is that I have taken such a fancy to you, dear Mr. Gerard, but I have. I feel as if there was nothing that I could keep secret from you, if I thought asking your advice about it would do any good. I am generally more reserved. Cradock used to say that I was very reserved with strangers; but Cradock was full of heart, and you are not a stranger.'

Mr. Gerard did not know whether to protest or disclaim, but for Juliet's sake he must be, do, and suffer many things.

'There's another point that I'd like to consult you about,' said Mrs. Cradock, with a diffident smile, which was scarcely perceptible in her wide expanse of face. 'You may perhaps think me foolish, but I don't feel as if I could make up my mind to leave my poor old home in Manchester, and come all the way to London to live in a really splendid house like the one I am now taking you to, just to be known by the same ugly, commonplace name that I was known by in Manchester. What does very well for Manchester does not do for London; and in Manchester they know all about the pills, and think all the more of me for belonging to the man who invented them, and got so much money out of them. But it's not the same here in London. In London, if any one happens to name Mrs. Cradock, someone instantly exclaims, "Oh, Cradock's Sympathetic Pills," and everyone looks as if he had just swallowed a box full of them, and did not like the taste. The connection does me harm, and I don't want harm done to me. I am thinking of making a slight alteration in my name, Mr. Gerard, just to suit Berkeley Square a little better, that's all.'

'Cradock is a very good old name,' said Mr. Gerard, 'and, even if it were not, I should stick to my own name if I were you; and then you have so many friends and acquaintances who know you by it.'

'Oh, that's nothing! If they changed their names I should have to call them by the new ones they had chosen, so they must do the same by me. Mrs. Cradock sounds nothing at all. As soon as I go to my new house, I intend to be called Mrs. Slingsby-Caradoc.'

'I think I have heard that Caradoc is the ancient form of Cradock—I am sure I have.'

'Of course it is. Mr. Freeman has told me so many a time, so no one need say that I am taking what I have no-right to.'

'And Slingsby?' asked Mr. Gerard, very doubtfully.

‘Well, Slingsby?’ replied Mrs. Cradock, defiantly. ‘What have you to say against Slingsby? It is not a family name, perhaps, but that is of no consequence!’

‘Your husband was called Slingsby, or perhaps some of your family bore it as a second name?’

‘No, it was not in his family, and it was not in mine,’ said Mrs. Cradock, still more defiantly, ‘but that’s nothing, I suppose, if I choose to take it. It is just a name that seems to me to sound well. I shall call myself Mrs. Slingsby-Caradoc, with a nice aristocratic-looking little bar between the two names.’

‘That bar, hyphen I mean, signifies that you represent the two families—that both names are equally yours.’

‘Oh, nonsense! That is what it may have meant once. You don’t want to make me believe that it does that now! Why shouldn’t I have my Slingsby and my hyphen if I wish to have them? You have only to look at any list of subscribers to any popular charity to see all sorts of names hyphenated together that have just been arranged that way because the people thought that they would look well. The Erskine-Jacksons, next door to the Freemans, don’t represent either the Erskines or the Jacksons, but Jackson by itself is hardly a name at all, so they put in Erskine; and Erskine and Jackson look ever so much better with a hyphen, so they put one, and if you said anything to them about their representing the two families they wouldn’t so much as know what you meant. They have their little hyphen because they like it, and I’ll have mine. Here we are; isn’t it a beautiful house?’

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## CHAPTER V.

AT CHRISTIE’S.

‘What are pictures but paintings—what are auctions but sales?’

E. FITZGERALD’S *Letters*.

‘DEAR Mr. Gerard,’ said Mrs. Cradock next morning, ‘Mrs. Freeman is busy writing letters; I do wish you would come and talk to me. I wish you would tell me what constitutes being a woman of fashion.’

Mr. Gerard looked puzzled, and said that the species was little known to him, but proceeded to enumerate some of its characteristics; but she interrupted him, however, almost immediately by saying:

'Do you think I could ever be one—by the help of good West-end tradesmen, I mean? I am not so foolish as to imagine that I could do it all by myself.' Before he could reply to this difficult question, she said, 'Cradock used always to tell me that there was a great deal of distinction to be got by buying very good water-colours—pictures that everyone else is dying to see, and to have, you know, and I think Cradock often had very just ideas.'

'I have this moment been reading about a particularly fine water-colour picture which is to be sold at Christie's auction-rooms this very day; it is Turner's "*Cathedin Castle*," and last time it came to the hammer it brought eighteen hundred pounds. That's a stiff price for a picture, isn't it?'

'Very! Would people envy me if I had it, and be always wishing to get to know me for the sake of seeing my picture?' she frankly inquired.

'Read what the *Times* says,' he answered. 'It seems as if this picture were a masterpiece. There is a quarter of a column about it.'

'A quarter of a column! Then I declare I will buy it!' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock. 'I will go and buy it. Why shouldn't I? I am very well able to afford it.'

'You had better read what the *Times* says. Here it is.'

Mrs. Cradock took the paper, and learned that '*Cathedin Castle*' was a large-sized water-colour, and had lain *perdu* in a folio for more than a quarter of a century. This had been of service to its reputation. Not only were its colours fresher than most of the great master's works, but the drawing itself was so little known that when it had first come to Christie's, five or six years before, it had flashed forth on the public as a sudden revelation. There had been sharp competition, and it had been knocked down finally for eighteen hundred pounds, which was then a very high price for a Turner. The collection in which it then found a place had conferred additional value on the work, and now it was expected to realise a still larger sum.

'It must be a magnificent picture,' said Mr. Gerard.

'I dare say it is,' assented Mrs. Cradock, absently. She evidently did not particularly care whether it was good or bad, so long as it was a picture which would increase the importance of its owner. 'I'll have it!' she exclaimed suddenly. 'I have quite made up my mind.'

'What have you quite made up your poor dear mind about?' asked Mrs. Freeman, raising her head from her letter on hearing

tones of such decision that they forced their way to her across that large room.

'I am going to Christie's this afternoon to buy Turner's "Cathedin Castle."

'Really! I have just been reading a great deal about it in the *Times*. It must be very fine. Let us all go to Christie's this afternoon, and buy it. It will be delightful; but I am afraid a great many others will go with the same intention.'

'I don't care for that. They may go if they choose, but I mean to have it.'

They hurried off soon after luncheon, though they might have known that no picture of importance would be sold so early in the day, scaling the steep flight of stairs to the auction-room like people who did it daily. The great room was crowded. The seats round the table were all occupied by gentlemen who sat with heads bowed down over their catalogues, or uttering a few urgent words to their immediate neighbours. The work of selling was proceeding briskly.

'I hope they intend to offer us chairs,' observed Mrs. Cradock; but encouragement of that kind is not often given to ladies, who, as a rule, are in the way at a picture sale.

'We must be content to stand, my dear,' replied Mrs. Freeman. 'We shall have to wait a while; there are twenty pictures to sell before they get to "Cathedin," and I fear there is nothing very interesting on the walls.'

Indeed there was not. They were covered by the dingiest of pictures in the most florid of frames.

'I think you ought to get a dealer to bid for you,' said Mrs. Freeman, turning away from these in despair of entertainment. As she spoke, she observed a gentleman who, up to this time, had been standing by assiduously perusing his catalogue, move a step or two nearer. He hastily removed from his mouth a pencil which he had been tranquilly nibbling, took off his hat, and blandly said: 'Ladies, if you wish to purchase any of the pictures which are being sold, I shall have great pleasure in bidding for you on the usual terms.'

'Thank you,' said Mrs. Cradock, more loudly than was necessary. 'Bidding in an auction-room is not pleasant work for females. I am going to buy the "Cathedin Castle."

He was surprised and showed it, but instantly began to treat her with much more respect. 'Are you, indeed, madam?' said he. 'I imagine there will be a good deal of competition for it.

If you will allow me, I will stay by your side and take your instructions.' He was a short, trim-looking man, whose gloves seemed to be an object of much care to him. 'May I ask if you are a dealer?' said Mrs. Freeman.

'Yes, I am. My name is Hastings. It is well known in the art world.'

'I see Mr. Kinross over there,' she continued. 'I suppose he is sure to bid against us?'

'Kinross! Ah, yes; I should think that is very probable.'

'Which is Mr. Kinross?' inquired Mrs. Cradock, for even she had heard of the greatest of our picture-dealers.

Mr. Kinross was pointed out to her. He was standing on the outskirts of the assembly talking, apparently unconcernedly, to someone who chanced to be near him, but he never lost the sound of a bid, or any hint of the turn the sale was taking, and from time to time he looked round, almost impatiently, and made a bid himself, immediately turning away again, and continuing his discourse as if the result of his bid was of no importance, and yet he never failed to secure the picture if he wanted it.

'Dear Mrs. Freeman, do tell me why so many of the gentlemen keep the points of their pencils between their teeth?' said Mrs. Cradock.

'You must put that question to Mr. Hastings; he is much more familiar with Christie's than I,' she answered, with a smile.

'It is because they want them for marking their catalogues, and are afraid of losing them,' he said.

'Oh!' exclaimed Mrs. Freeman, and Mrs. Cradock wondered if that were all.

Several water-colours had been knocked down, and when half a dozen more were sold, the turn of 'Cathedrin' would come.

'Promise to stay beside me, Mr. Hastings,' said Mrs. Cradock, who was becoming more and more excited. 'I must have that picture.' She need not have been afraid; wild horses would not have torn him from her side. But he was tenderly sensitive when art was in question, and the word picture hurt him.

'You say picture, madam,' he said, therefore. 'But do excuse me, Turner's "Cathedrin" is a drawing.'

'A drawing!' exclaimed Mrs. Cradock, angrily. 'A nasty pen-and-ink or pencil thing! You surely don't think that I am going to stand about waiting in an uncomfortable auction-room, and pay a high price for a thing of that kind? Let us go, dear Mrs. Freeman. I find that I have made a mistake—a drawing indeed!'

What appearance is there about a drawing?' Mr. Hastings was all this time trying to speak, but the lady's volubility left him no opening. 'Don't bid for me, I say. I don't care a pin for things that have got no colour to set them off.'

'But it has colour! It has beautiful colour! It is a picture painted in water-colours, that's all. Pictures painted in water-colours are always called drawings. Shall I bid for it for you, madam? You understand, I hope, that it is a picture?'

'If it really has colours in it you may bid, but I'd like to see that it has for myself.' 'Water-colour pictures are called drawings,' she repeated to herself. 'I must remember that if I am going to have a collection of them.'

'To what figure are you prepared to go, madam?' he asked. 'It is a magnificent specimen of Turner's art—it would be a great pity not to secure it.'

But the more he said the more he excited her doubt, and she had only his word for the fact that drawing meant picture; so she answered almost coldly, 'I am not quite sure. I haven't made up my mind what I am going to do.'

He felt this chance of securing a good 'client' slipping away from him, but resolved to stay by her side and wait.

'Mr. Hastings, you know about such things, I suppose,' said Mrs. Cradock, appealingly. 'I wish you would tell me if pictures by an artist called Linnell, whose name is in this catalogue, are good? I have some of his, but never particularly cared for them myself. I once got him to take a resemblance of my dear husband. It seemed pretty good to me, but when Mr. Cradock saw it, he did not like it, and just kicked his foot straight through it. Mr. Cradock bought a quantity of pictures, or perhaps they were drawings, out of London exhibitions, but they were all taken off the walls when I had my drawing-rooms redecorated, and I hung up "Monarchs of the Glen," and a lot of lions, and dogs, and things of that kind, by Landseer, and thought they looked much better.'

'My dear, I always told you that you had made a great mistake,' said Mrs. Freeman; 'you must bring up all those water-colours of yours and put them in good places in your new house, and then—'

'Do excuse me, we had better stand a little nearer—the Turner is going to be put up in another minute!' said Mr. Hastings, in some agitation.

Mrs. Cradock looked perfectly calm. They moved nearer, and

then with eyes strained to see beyond their range of vision, she perceived the drawing which had brought her there. 'It has plenty of colour in it—if anything it is too gaudy,' was her only remark, and Mr. Hastings feared it boded ill. And yet he thoroughly misunderstood her. She was even then enjoying with a sense of ownership the applause which greeted the appearance of the masterpiece. Then followed a few words from the auctioneer to introduce the drawing to the assemblage, and then a brief hush of expectation, or a gathering together of forces for the contest.

'I am to bid for it?' asked Mr. Hastings, eagerly.

'Yes, but don't be in any hurry, and wait for my signals.'

'It will fall through,' he wailed inwardly. 'What a dreadful thing it is to have to depend on the caprice of a woman!'

'Will any one offer a thousand pounds to begin with?' asked the auctioneer, but no one would. Someone offered fifty, but though the bid was received with derision, there was no sudden advance. It went up by fives and tens to one hundred pounds, and then by bids of ten to two hundred. Mrs. Cradock heard the bidding, and looked anxiously at Mr. Hastings, but as yet he had taken no interest, and she understood his tactics, and approved of them. He did not want to seem too eager. Just as the bid of two hundred guineas was made, her eyes chanced to fall on Mr. Kinross, who was still standing aloof from the scene of contest, with his back turned to the auctioneer, and the attendant who was trying to hold up 'Cathedrin.' Suddenly he half-turned to the auctioneer, and, as if impatient of such trifling, said in a loud and distinct voice, 'Two thousand!' and then resumed the conversation he had momentarily interrupted, as if that alone were of any importance.

'Any advance on two thousand guineas,' cried the auctioneer, as soon as he had recovered his surprise. 'Going at two thousand guineas! Turner's magnificent drawing going at this ridiculously small sum!'

Mr. Hastings had, like many others, been for a moment electrified by this unexpected bid, but he knew that he must recover quickly and did so. He looked at Mrs. Cradock—his look showed that he had very little hope of her being equal to the situation.

'What shall I do, madam?' he said anxiously.

Her face was turned from him. 'It has choked her off like the rest,' was his thought. 'What a pity!'

‘Shall I bid higher?’ he asked, laying his hand on her arm to make her look at him; but her eyes were riveted on the auctioneer.

‘Any advance on two thousand guineas?’ he repeated. ‘Going! Going! G——’ but before he could finish that fatal word Mrs. Cradock had recovered herself, and in a loud, clear voice exclaimed, ‘Three thousand!’

There was a tumult of applause; it resounded on every side, and then all eyes turned to Mr. Kinross. Would he suffer himself to be beaten by his own weapons, or would he bid four thousand? He was talking very earnestly to two gentlemen, and did not seem to be aware of what was going on. It was difficult to believe that he had ever made a bid at all.

‘Any advance on three thousand guineas?’ cried the excited auctioneer. ‘Going! Going!! — G-o-n-e!!!’

When the hammer fell the applause was deafening. Mrs. Cradock had never been so happy in her life.

‘What name?’ asked the clerk so soon as he could make himself heard.

‘Hastings!’ exclaimed the dealer, who was determined not to be left out.

‘It is yours, madam,’ said he; ‘I congratulate you!’

‘My dear, it is yours!’ said the amazed Mrs. Freeman, ‘and you bid for it yourself!’

‘Yes, and I am going to bid for two or three more,’ replied Mrs. Cradock, whose thirst for conquest was thoroughly aroused.

‘No, you have done quite enough for one day. You shall buy no more to-day. I am glad you have got that Turner, but we must have no rashness, please.’

‘I am just going back to my own little gallery,’ said Mr. Hastings, who heard this and saw vistas of profit opening endlessly out before him; ‘I have some beautiful works in it; may I solicit the honour of a visit? You could call on your way home. My collection is well worthy of the attention of a connoisseur like you, and perhaps I could be of service to you in arranging your own collection.’ He held out his card.

Mrs. Freeman hastened to speak. ‘Thank you, Mr. Hastings. This lady is staying with me at present; we will come and see your pictures some day with pleasure, but I want to take her home now.’

‘But I should like to buy another picture,’ pleaded Mrs. Cradock.

‘It is such a beautiful taste !’ said Mr. Hastings, feelingly.

‘Yes, I must have another picture—drawing, I mean—I do wish I could remember to say drawing.’

Mrs. Freeman took her a little aside and whispered, ‘Dear Mrs. Cradock, don’t be in such a hurry ! You will have many opportunities of forming a good collection.’

‘She wants to form a collection,’ said Mr. Hastings to himself ; ‘what an invaluable old woman !’

‘Madam,’ he said aloud, ‘there is an admirable sketch by Linnell here.’

‘The same Linnell who painted the resemblance of my dear husband, which he thought so bad that he went and kicked his foot through it ?’

‘The same,’ said Mr. Hastings, without a smile. ‘This sketch will sell for a trifle compared with your Turner.’

‘Wait till you see how much you have to do in your new house. You are sure to have to buy a great deal of furniture,’ said Mrs. Freeman, with all the anxious care that people do take when the pockets of the rich are in question.

‘I am buying Lord Edensor’s furniture, and mean to try to be content with it. Buy me the Linnell, Mr. Hastings—there is no one to kick his foot through it now, more’s the pity !’

‘A gentleman has begged me to introduce him to you,’ said Mr. Hastings.

Before Mrs. Cradock half understood what he was saying, he had brought forward a fine-looking old gentleman, whom he introduced as Dr. Fanshawe.

‘We are having an exhibition of Turners at the Devereux Club very shortly, madam,’ said he, ‘and we hope that you will lend us the beautiful example of which you have just become possessed.’

‘Oh !’ said another gentleman, ‘I fear I am too late. I was just going to see if I could not get an introduction to you, madam, that I might ask you to lend me that magnificent drawing for our next exhibition at the Reynolds Club ; my name is Clifton, I am the secretary. My friend, Dr. Fanshawe, has been too quick for me, I am afraid. Perhaps in compassion for my disappointment you will lend us something else from your collection ?’

‘My collection !’ repeated Mrs. Cradock proudly to herself, ‘I have not got a collection yet, but it won’t be long before I have one.’ Then she said to Mr. Clifton : ‘I am sorry to say that all

my drawings'—how proud she was of her knowledge of the word!—'are now in the country. I am just moving into a house in Berkeley Square—perhaps you want them at once?'

'Oh, but you will lend the "Cathedin" to the club in which I am interested?' interposed Dr. Fanshawe. 'You must not let Mr. Clifton have that.'

'No, you were the first comer,' said Mrs. Cradock; 'it shall go to the Devereux.'

'But you will allow me to call on you to make a selection from your art treasures for our club as soon as they arrive in London?' persisted Mr. Clifton. 'I have no doubt your collection is rich enough to give substantial help to both our exhibitions.'

'I don't know, I am sure,' replied Mrs. Cradock, and no truer answer was ever given. 'Whatever I can do to oblige you, gentlemen, shall be done with pleasure.'

'Then you extend your kindness to us, too?' said the secretary of the Reynolds. 'Will you kindly give me your address, madam, and say when I may call?'

'And I should like your address too, madam, if you will be so good as to give it,' said Dr. Fanshawe.

Mrs. Cradock borrowed Mr. Hastings's pencil, tore a blank leaf out of her catalogue, divided it in half, and on each piece of paper wrote, 'Mrs. Slingsby-Caradoc, 302 Berkeley Square.' Mrs. Freeman looked on amazed, but silent. 'My dear,' she said, when they were on their way home again, 'I knew that you had one or two good drawings, but I never knew you had a collection. However, a man who could afford to kick his foot through a Linnell must have had good pictures in reserve.'

'You shall see,' answered Mrs. Cradock, in whose ears the applause which had followed her purchase of 'Cathedin' was still ringing. 'You shall see!'

'I see one thing,' replied Mrs. Freeman. 'You are very well satisfied with your morning's work.'

'No, I am not. I am just taking myself to task about it. I have made a very stupid mistake. Either of those two gentlemen would have been quite willing to let their clubs pay the carriage of my drawings from Manchester to London if they had gone straight to their exhibition rooms, and I have been so foolish as to let this advantage slip away from me for want of asking, so now I shall have to pay the carriage myself. It's downright waste of good money.'

Mrs. Freeman gazed at her in astonishment. Mr. Gerard did the same. 'You would have had to pay the carriage of your drawings when you moved,' they said in one breath.

'No doubt, but it would have been much wiser to hand over that duty to them.'

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## CHAPTER VI.

'SUPPOSE SHE IS EXPECTING HIM.'

Was ever book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound?—*Romeo and Juliet*.

IN another week Mrs. Slingsby-Caradoc—for, in spite of much remonstrance from her friends, that was henceforth to be Mrs. Cradock's name—was settled in Berkeley Square. Her house was a large one, and, as she thought, rather plainly furnished, but she had enriched it by bringing some of her own inlaid cabinets and luxurious chairs and sofas from Manchester, and was beginning to feel that she might perhaps be able to make Lord Edensor's furniture do. Her works of art had of course already arrived. There were about twenty old water-colours, all of which had lived for ten years in strict seclusion, with their faces turned to the wall, in a lumber-room. Whether they were good or bad Mrs. Caradoc knew not, but Mr. Clifton, secretary to the Reynolds Club, had written to say that he would call on Wednesday next, at three, to make a selection from them for the next exhibition in the club-rooms. Two o'clock had come, and Mrs. Caradoc was beginning to feel extremely uneasy. Juliet had made her so by asking if she would not feel very uncomfortable when Mr. Clifton asked for the names of the artists who had painted these pictures, and she was forced to confess that she was totally unable to give them. None of them were signed, and no record of their purchase had ever been kept. 'He will ask me for the names of the artists, and I shall look like a fool. Pity me, Mr. Gerard,' said the old lady ruefully; 'do pity me, for he will think it so queer.'

'Who will think what queer?' inquired the puzzled gentleman, who had not heard what Juliet had said.

'That gentleman—that secretary who is coming from the Reynolds Club.'

'Oh, Mr. Clifton!'

'Yes, Mr. Clifton. Juliet says that he is sure to want to know who painted those pictures—drawings, I mean—and for the life of me I can't tell him. He will have to know the names, you see. How can he make a catalogue if not? I have a great mind to put fancy names of artists to them.'

'You must not think of such a thing,' exclaimed Mr. Gerard. 'Mr. Clifton must know something about drawings, or they would not send him here; he will soon see who painted them.'

'How can he? There is nothing to guide him,' said Mrs. Caradoc. 'He will ask me, and I shall be disgraced. It looks so ignorant of a collector not to know. He will laugh at me; he will tell other people, and they will laugh too. How I wish I had refused to let him come.'

'Would you like me to see him for you?' asked Juliet; 'a little ignorance would seem quite natural in me.'

'Do you know that's a very good idea,' observed Mr. Gerard. 'Let Miss Juliet be the one to receive him.'

'That might do,' replied Mrs. Caradoc, with a slight sense of relief. 'You are not supposed to know anything about drawings, Juliet; but, you see, the world is beginning to look on me as a great collector. You could stand by and let him inspect them and make his choice. Tell him that you know nothing about art, and then you will have no trouble. That would save all our credit.'

'You could say that you knew nothing, too, if you liked,' observed Mr. Gerard, bluntly.

'I!' exclaimed Mrs. Caradoc. 'How can I do that when I bought the "Cathedrin"? It would be a strange thing for the person who gave three thousand guineas for a Turner to say that she knew nothing about drawings.'

'Of course it would, aunt, and you must not do it,' said Juliet, promptly. 'You must let me stay at home and receive him. I don't mind doing it a bit.'

'Then I will go to the concert instead of you.'

'Yes, aunt, but you must be quick, or he will be here before you get away.'

Mr. Gerard had come to lunch. His London visit was fast drawing to a close, and he had never yet succeeded in having the quiet talk with Juliet which he was sure she was longing for as much as he. He had been sent by Mrs. Freeman to fetch her to go to an afternoon concert with them, and had expected to have time to say all he wished on the way, but this new arrangement put an end to that. He wondered if, when there, he could

leave the two older ladies to enjoy their music alone, and return to Berkeley Square and Juliet.

Mrs. Caradoc dressed to go, and then began to have doubts as to whether she ought not to stay at home.

'After all, Juliet, I begin to think I ought to see Mr. Clifton myself. You had better go to the concert. Besides, you are the one who was invited.'

'Oh, no, aunt, do go. I am quite sure it is better for me to see him. And I don't want to go to the concert. I had much rather stay here.'

'But you will feel it so awkward!'

'Not awkward a bit! I shall just hold my tongue, and let him talk.'

'Would you feel more comfortable if I stayed with you?' asked Mr. Gerard, hoping she would say yes.

'It is most kind of you to think of it,' she answered, 'but I don't feel uncomfortable. Why should I?'

'Do let me stay with you,' he pleaded.

'Oh, please, don't,' she answered. 'I should feel shy if you were here, but I shall not care at all if I am alone.'

He sighed. He wanted to stay. He would never have such an opportunity again.

'Let me,' he urged once more.

Juliet shook her head decidedly, and answered, 'It is very kind of you to offer, but please go with aunt.'

'Oh, I am nobody!' exclaimed Mrs. Caradoc, who had for some time been feeling offended. 'Nobody at all! There is not the slightest necessity for either of you to consider me!'

'We like to consider you,' replied Juliet; 'but, my dear aunt, you must go soon, or you will meet Mr. Clifton in the hall. He ought to be here in five minutes. If you want to avoid him, I assure you you must be quick.'

Mrs. Caradoc was quick. Her carriage was waiting, and they drove away, but just as they left the square they met a hansom, and Mr. Gerard could have sworn that Mr. Congreve was inside it. It was going in the direction of the house that they had just left. Why should a hansom with Mr. Congreve inside it not enter Berkeley Square? He could not explain why this sight should create so much uneasiness in his mind. He wondered whether Mrs. Caradoc had happened to look inside that cab. 'Have you seen anything of Mr. Congreve lately?' he inquired, in as unconcerned a voice as he could command.

‘Yes, we met him one night at a great musical entertainment, and he said he had heard that I was coming to live in London before long, and wondered if I would give him permission to call, and I said that I did not think I should be settled for some time, and when I was I only intended to receive old and intimate friends. Lord forgive me for being such a liar, but I didn’t want him to know I was here already, and I couldn’t tell what to do.’

‘And how did he receive it?’

‘He looked, if possible, blacker than he was before, but I didn’t care. I had put an end to his visits. But what made you think of him?’

Before he could find an answer, she said, ‘It would be odd if it turned out that your head was filled with the same thought that mine is! You must have noticed how extremely anxious Juliet was to get me out of the house, and how unwilling she was to let you stay with her. I did not think of it until we were in the carriage. I wish you had stayed with her. Her manner was most peculiar. Suppose she is expecting him to call?’

‘What! after that promise she gave? Impossible! Oh, I couldn’t suppose such a thing as that!’ And yet Mrs. Caradoc’s words made him still more uncomfortable.

‘Perhaps you are right, but she is a very *roosy* girl.’

‘She is quite innocent of any *ruse* now, I am convinced,’ said he, for did he not know that Juliet was a wedded wife, and a wife who dearly loved her husband?

‘I dare say you are right,’ replied Mrs. Caradoc, appeased for the moment, though not wholly satisfied. ‘I am so anxious about what Mr. Clifton will say of my drawings—foolishly anxious, perhaps, but I do so want them to be good ones. You see my credit seems to be involved. I wish I had gone and bought one or two undoubtedly good ones, and mixed them all together.’

They went to Duke’s Gardens and picked up Mrs. Freeman, and then on to their concert, but scarcely had they been in the room ten minutes before Mrs. Caradoc said, ‘I do so wish I could find some way of sending a message to Juliet.’

‘I will take one with pleasure,’ said Mr. Gerard. ‘What message do you want to send?’

She jumped at the offer. ‘I want you to tell her to keep a pencil in her hand and note down every word that Mr. Clifton says. He will know who painted those pictures, and their value, and I must know too. Make Juliet write everything down.’

He rose to go, and she sank back much relieved, for she was

about to form a collection, and it was imperative that she should gain all possible information. It was now five-and-twenty minutes to four, and he was sure that by this time Mr. Clifton had made his inspection of the drawings and was gone, but he jumped into a hansom and drove to Berkeley Square—not to give orders about supplying Miss Juliet with pencil and paper, but to have his own comforting conversation with the desolate young wife in whom he took so much interest.

‘There is a gentleman with Miss Cradock—I beg your pardon, sir—Miss Caradoc, I mean,’ said the servant.

‘Yes, I know—about the pictures,’ said Mr. Gerard.

‘Yes, sir. He came as it might be about three minutes after you left.’

‘In a hansom?’

‘Yes, sir, in a hansom.’

‘Then I think I saw him. He is a thin, pale-looking young man, with a great deal of very dark hair.’

‘Yes, sir, a great deal. Mr. Congreve, sir, that was the name on his card.’

‘Mr. Congreve! But you said that he had come about the pictures.’

‘He did, sir. He asked for Mrs. Slingsby-Caradoc, and I said that she was not at home, but Miss Caradoc was in.’

‘Indeed!’ said Mr. Gerard very sadly, and he had not the heart to utter another word. The servant looked at him, and he looked blankly at the servant, and at last he forced himself to say, ‘I think, as he is still busy with the pictures, I will not come in now, but if you will wait a moment I will write a little message for Miss Caradoc on my card.’ He quickly wrote, ‘Mrs. Caradoc wishes you to make careful notes of what Mr. C. tells you about the drawings.’ Then with much bitterness he thought, ‘The C. will do either for Clifton or Congreve; but, good God! what can this mean?’

The most dismal thoughts now took possession of his mind. Mrs. Caradoc was fond of informing him that Juliet was a *rusé* girl, and always treated her as one deserving of suspicion, but up to this time he had regarded this as a cruel injustice. Now he was wretched—wretched for Aylesbury, for Juliet, and for himself. It was perfectly true that she had seemed eager to get them out of the house. What had he done when he bound such a girl as this to the son of the man whom he had loved so well? He could not leave the neighbourhood, but walked up and down the streets,

keeping away from those which led into the square itself; for though he would have given half his worldly substance to know that Juliet had not expected this visit, and plotted to get her aunt and himself out of the way, nothing would have induced him to lie in wait to surprise any of her secrets. He did not know how long he had been wandering about those streets, as unconscious of the busy passers-by as if he had been alone on Limberthwaite Moor, when he heard a voice which had vainly been trying to make itself heard for some time, saying, 'Mr. Gerard! Mr. Gerard! Do listen!' It sounded very like Mrs. Caradoc's, and turning in bewilderment, he saw that her carriage had pulled up close to the kerbstone near him, and that Mrs. Caradoc herself was standing up in the carriage, with her head stretched out of the window, trying, much to the amusement of those within hearing, to rouse him from his fit of abstraction.

'You here, dear Mr. Gerard!' said she, when he went to her. 'You do look so ill and tired. Come home with me, and have some tea, or wine, or something. I couldn't be happy to let you go back to Mrs. Freeman's looking like that. You must come, and then you will hear how Juliet has got on with Mr. Clifton, and what he has said about my poor, dear drawings.' For the collector's instinct was already roused in Mrs. Caradoc, and dearly she loved those twenty drawings, which for the last ten years had only been tolerated in her house on condition that they stood with their faces to the wall. 'Come, dear Mr. Gerard, I'll take no denial,' said she, trying to draw him in, for he was still standing on the pavement as if unable to come to any decision. So, almost in spite of himself, he got into the carriage, and let himself be taken to Berkeley Square, dreading, yet longing, to see Juliet. He felt that one glance in her face would be enough to show him whether the Juliet whom he had given his dear young friend as a wife was a good true woman, or only a heartless creature who found pleasure in accepting all the love that came in her way. 'One glance will be enough,' he thought; 'truth and honour sit firmly on any seat where they have once established themselves, and their presence is recognised at once.'

They went into the hall. Would the man who let them in be the one to say that Mr. Congreve had been there, or would that task be left to Juliet? 'The chances are that he will hold his tongue,' thought Mr. Gerard. 'He told me, when I came with a message, and he will think that that's enough.'

Perhaps Mr. Gerard would have found himself mistaken if

Mrs. Caradoc had not happened to espy a new hall-door mat which had been put down during her absence. It was a rough one, with the word '*Salve*' in large letters.

'I don't like that mat!' she exclaimed. 'It must go back, for I won't have it! *Salve*, indeed! when everyone knows that it was pills— And neither pills nor salve look well on a door-mat. Who wants things of that kind flung in his face the moment the door is opened to him?' She was angry, and had walked half across the hall before she bethought herself of the risk she might be running of seeing the man whom she had gone out to avoid, and turned to say, 'Richard, I suppose the gentleman has gone?'

'Yes, ma'am, he left at a quarter-past four.'

He had been there an hour and a quarter.

'Then let us go and hear what Juliet has to tell us, dear Mr. Gerard,' she said joyously. 'Oh, I am so curious!'

So was Mr. Gerard, and heavy-hearted too.

'Juliet! my dear Juliet!' cried Mrs. Caradoc, hurrying on, and beginning to speak even before she opened the drawing-room door.

Juliet was sitting near one of the windows. Mr. Gerard saw that she was not reading or working, but only thinking very quietly and intently. She came forward to meet them, looking perfectly calm and collected. There was no trace of past emotion on her face—no alarm, no appearance of having anything to hide. Mr. Gerard looked at her in amazement. A woman possessed of such self-control as that could carry any secret to the grave with her unsuspected.

'Well, my dear,' exclaimed Mrs. Caradoc, breathlessly, 'be quick and tell me what Mr. Clifton said. Was he pleased with the drawings?'

'Very!' replied Juliet quietly, though Mr. Gerard could not help thinking she was rather disturbed by this wrongful cognomen. 'He was delighted with them! He says that four of them are very good indeed, and some of the others are extremely interesting. He wants you to lend seven to the Reynolds Club.'

'Oh, how delightful! But I hope you have made careful notes of all he said. I sent to tell you to write it all down.'

'Unfortunately all that was really important had been said before I got your message. But there is no difficulty in remembering it. Come into the back drawing-room where the drawings are, and I will tell you what he said of each as we come to it. There are two early Turners. They are interesting examples, but

of course not so fine as his later work. The four best are by Girtin, Colman, Robson, and Varley, and he liked a Thirtle. He said that Thirtle's works are not much known. These five are all good and valuable.'

'Juliet,' said Mrs. Caradoc, earnestly, 'did Mr. Clifton happen to use the word "collection" when speaking of my poor drawings?'

'He did. He said that with these and the Turner and Linnell you bought the other day you had the nucleus of a really good collection.'

Mrs. Caradoc looked radiant, and exclaimed, 'Then, please God, I'll soon have one. But go on. What about the others? I am so impatient.'

'They are not so good,' answered Juliet. 'They are by fairly good men, but are not very fine examples of their art. There, those are his very words. Have I not remembered well?'

'Those are Mr. Clifton's very words, dear Mr. Gerard, do you hear? I don't mind some of the drawings being rather inferior. There are half a dozen fine works, and that is more than I expected—much more. "The nucleus of a really good collection"—those are Mr. Clifton's words too, are they not, Juliet? Well, if he comes again in a year's time, he shall see! That is all I can say—he shall see!'

Mr. Gerard was paying more attention to Juliet's face than to anything else. He was lying in wait to espy any change of expression, any sign of uneasiness, or wish to give Mrs. Caradoc an ample explanation in private. No such sign was now to be seen. How dared she deceive her aunt thus? He thought he would see how far her intention to deceive would conduct her, and said, 'What did you say this gentleman's name was, Miss Juliet?'

Then she blushed painfully and hesitated, but Mrs. Caradoc rushed in and filled up the gap which Juliet's silence was making. 'His name is Clifton, and he is a dear, good man, I am sure. How I wish now that I had stayed at home to receive him myself. I should so have enjoyed hearing all about the drawings.'

Would Juliet let this pass? Would she allow her aunt to continue in this false impression? Juliet was poring over a sketch which lay upon the table. She was, so far as he could judge, anything but comfortable, but not intending to give Mrs. Caradoc's visitor his true name. How could she let her aunt talk about Mr. Clifton? Mr. Clifton was Mr. Congreve, who might have some knowledge of art, but had not come there to see drawings. He had come to see the woman he loved, and she whose love was

vowed to another seemed to have no thought but how best to keep her aunt in ignorance of his visit. Mr. Gerard gazed at her fair but now somewhat troubled face until he all but hated her for her falseness. And then another light on this affair flashed on him, only to guide him to still more insecure standing ground. Aylesbury himself had said that he had quarrelled with Juliet—that their marriage was to have taken place earlier, but had been given up because they had quarrelled. He had been foolishly jealous, he said, but he had repented him of his folly, and he and Juliet had been reconciled. They had quarrelled, no doubt, about this Congreve, and Mr. Gerard did not marvel at it. He was glad he was going back to Limberthwaite—would to God that he had never left it!

Meanwhile snatches of what Juliet was telling her aunt in the other room occasionally forced their way into his ears. ‘Yes, he said it was good in feeling, but that the execution was weak,’ or ‘He told me if you wanted Turner at his best you must buy one of the Yorkshire drawings.’

‘One!’ exclaimed Mrs. Caradoc, like the boastful giant in Grimm’s *Hausmarchen*, ‘and why one? I’ll have a dozen of them, at least, if they are so good!’

A letter was brought to her. She opened it and read that Sir Gregory Jervaulx hoped to have the pleasure of calling on her next day at four. She put it into her niece’s hand and said, ‘Read that, my dear, and then give us some tea. I will take my wraps off in the back drawing-room. Pour out the tea. I shan’t be a minute.’

A minute, then, was to be all the time that Mr. Gerard would have to recall this erring wife to her duty. He began at once.

‘I must speak to you most se——’

‘And I must speak to you,’ interrupted Juliet, holding out Sir Gregory’s note. ‘Look here. Read this; only don’t say anything in a loud voice, or my aunt will hear. That’s from Sir Gregory. My troubles *are* beginning soon.’

‘Oh, never mind about Sir Gregory,’ said he; ‘there is something else that——’

‘Take care!’ whispered Juliet; ‘she has such quick ears! She will hear.’

‘But when can I speak to you?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘How can I see you?’

‘You can only see me when my aunt is there,’

‘Then I must write.’

Juliet shook her head. ‘She always insists on sharing any letter I receive, if she knows the writer too, and very often when she doesn’t.’

‘Then what can I do? You love your husband?’

‘Love him? How can you ask me? I shall be miserable till I get him back.’

‘Then for Heaven’s sake respect his wishes, and refuse to associate with persons who would be distasteful to him.’

Juliet’s face turned crimson, but she said very quietly, ‘I know whom you mean. You may trust me.’

‘Then why, in the name of all that is honest and honourable, can’t you be——’

‘Open about the visit he has just paid you?’ was the end of the sentence that Mr. Gerard was destined never to finish. He had just reached the middle of it when Mrs. Caradoc came briskly into the room, exclaiming, ‘Now, good people, let us have our tea. Juliet, I fully expected you would have it poured out, but it’s no matter; let’s have it now.’ There was a smile on her lips, her little eyes were dancing with delight, and in her mind the words ‘nucleus of an extremely good collection’ were dancing too, and that to the most joyous of tunes.

*(To be continued.)*

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

I HAD been reading the *Gorgias* of Plato, and some recent American criticisms of England. These volumes contain unprejudiced comparisons between the modern literature of England and America. Then I must have fallen asleep, for I seemed to be deciphering, from a Papyrus, the following dialogue. The style, as is natural in dreams, is of a mixed character, and the salt not purely Attic.

### *ARCHIAS, OR THE PATRIOT.*

Yesterday, as I was going to the Palaestra, I met Archias the Megarian.

‘Welcome, Archias,’ I said. ‘Are you long in Athens?’

‘I arrived,’ he said, ‘but yesterday.’

‘Be it far from me,’ I remarked, ‘to ask you so soon, *how you like our country.*’

‘Indeed,’ he answered, ‘I expected that many Athenians would have already encountered me with that very question, having tablets in their hands, whereon to record my answers truly or falsely. But there is no such matter.’

‘Is it your custom in Megara, Archias, to welcome strangers thus?’

‘Indeed it is,’ said he, ‘and we pursue them into their very bed-chambers, arousing them from their beds, whether “sweet sleep,” as Homer says, “already holds them,” or whether it does not.’

‘Then that is true, perhaps, which Hipparchus, the maker of

tales, he from Asia, recently told me. To myself it seemed that he was talking in irony, for you know the man, how fond of making mirth.'

'Indeed I do not know him,' said Archias. 'But what did he tell you concerning Megara? Oh, my country!' he added, with ecstasy.

'Hipparchus's story was that, having lately gone to Megara about his private affairs, he met in the inn a young man with tablets in his hands, who inquired of the slave, "Where is this Hipparchus, that I may immediately ask him questions?" The slave, pretending not to know Hipparchus (for he had received those orders), he himself addressed the stranger. "Are *you* looking for Hipparchus?" he said, "so am I; for I also carry tablets, whereon I write such things as strangers do not say to me, and then publish them abroad to the people for gold."

"That is me," exclaimed the other young man, "me all the time! And where *is* this Hipparchus?"

"He *is*," replied Hipparchus, "concealing himself either in the inn beside the harbour, or in that on the top of the Acropolis."

'Thereon the Megarian fled forth swiftly to seek his man. Now, as the distance is equal and equally great from the spot where they had conversed to the harbour and the Acropolis, the Megarian went, as we say, on two long and empty errands: the sun also being hot and the road dusty.'

'I conjecture,' said Archias, 'that Hipparchus, the stranger from Asia, will do wisely if he avoids Megara in future. But I do make it a marvel that no men have yet asked me "What I think of Athens."

'The Athenians,' I answered, 'are so full of pride that they really do not care to know what ideas a casual Megarian may entertain on that subject, especially if he has but now crossed their frontier.'

'They are a people flown with insolence,' said Archias, 'where the Demos truly rules (as in Megara), no man is allowed to hold his peace when they of the tablets question him. *The Demos has a right to know*, as one of our own poets says.'

'Indeed, Archias!' I answered. 'The Megarians, then, have poets?'

'They have,' he replied, 'and I wonder at you, Makros (for that is my name), so uneducated as you are! We have, and

have had, very many poets, both men and women, especially women.'

'This is good news,' I replied; 'for, to be frank with you, my friend, I know but one woman poet—you understand me—the *Æolian*!'

'Guess she ain't a patch on our Corinna, and Harriet, and Louisa, and Mary, and Helen,'—so he ran on with a very long list of ladies' names, pleasing, indeed, in themselves, though unfamiliar to my ears.

'And all these, you tell me, are poets?'

'Certainly, and immortal.'

'Happy Megara,' said I! 'Why was I not born a Megarian? Surely that was no true oracle which the Pythoness uttered when the Megarians asked, "What was their place in the ranks of Greek States?" Blessed are the Megarians, most excellent Archias, for all the rest of Hellas has borne but one woman poet, while *yours* are numerous as the sands by the seashore.'

'That's so,' said my friend, 'you bet! But to what man or hero is yonder statue erected?'

'It is the effigy of Miltiades,' I answered, 'who fought in the Median affairs; the artist was Phidias, whom we are apt to admire.'

'Now, I don't see any points about that figure,' the stranger remarked. 'Guess you crack up that little Persian scrimmage a deal too free. How many men did you lose, may I ask?'

'They say that one hundred and ninety-four heroes sleep in the shade of the Marathonian lion,' said I, raising the covering from my head.

'One, nine, four!' he exclaimed. 'Why, at Gettipolis both sides lost thirty-five thousand! And you should see our Odysseus's image by a Megarian artist. I conjecture that work displays the essential peculiarities of Megarian high art. Guess that image weighs—well—twenty times as much as your little chimney-piece figure round the corner.'

'It must be of astonishing magnitude and excellence,' I said; 'and you are quite right, oh, strange one! The greatness of a battle depends on the number of men slain, and the excellence of a statue on the amount of metal employed.'

Here I saluted a citizen who passed us, Eleutherandros indeed, who wrote lately concerning Sicilian affairs,

‘Whom do you salute?’ asked Archias, and, when I told him, hastily replied:—

‘I conjecture that Dieuchidas, a citizen of Megara, has written a history more secure of immortality than your Aulayides, or your Gibôn, or your Eleutherandros! And yet,’ he exclaimed, ‘I have been much among your learned Athenians, and heard them gladly, but they knew nothing of our Dieuchidas.’

‘Their loss was the greater,’ I said, for I was grieved that he had been vexed by the ignorance of the Athenians.

We were now approaching the stall of one that sold books, which my friend eagerly examined. There lay the works of many clever men, Athenians, and I paused to

unroll.

One precious tender-hearted scroll  
Of pure Stephanides,

as the poet says. It was put forth by the Scribneridae, the great copyists of Megara. The name of it was *The Wrecker*. Meanwhile the voyager was snorting at the volumes before his eyes.

‘Hippotês Hierax,’ says he, ‘brutal and untaught in grammar! Gualterus Byzantinus, pooh! Karteros, pshaw! Bareia Odunê, bosh! Where is our Hylax?’ and, as he spoke, he picked up and opened the *Biou Dromos* of Kiplidion.

Seeing that he was loitering, I walked on to the Palaestra, where I tarried for the space of an hour.

On my way homeward I passed the stall, and there he stood, just as I had left him, with the work of Kiplidion in his hands.

I touched him on the shoulder, and he started.

Then for the first time, and before never, I saw Archias blush.

Placing on the counter six drachmas, he put the book in his pocket, remarking in the Megarian dialect that it was ‘bully.’ I was so pleased with his conduct that I invited him to sup with myself and many other sophists, but as to what was said and what was drunk I prefer to reserve the narrative for another opportunity.

\* \* \*

In the last number of the 'Sign of the Ship' reference was made to Mr. Kipling's *City of Dreadful Night*. I am informed that Mr. Kipling was not cognisant of this reproduction of some old newspaper articles of his; nor, indeed, did I for a moment suppose that he knew anything about the matter. The book seems to have been named and put forth in India, whence it reached the Indian publishers' English agents.

\* \* \*

'The year which sees the liberation of so potent an educational force deserves to be marked with a white stone.' Last year, 1891, is the golden age which deserves this token of respect and gratitude. But what do you suppose is the event thus thrillingly commemorated by the *Athenæum* of January 2? Let the patient reader think over it; what occurrence in 1891 was the liberation of a potent educational force? No schoolmaster was let out of gaol after killing a boy 'with wopping' as far as I remember. Colenso's Arithmetic was not published for the first time, nor 'Mr. Todhunter's excellent Euclid,' though to describe the publication of a school book as 'the liberation of so potent an educational force' would be to speak in a very queer way. No, 'the liberation of so potent an educational force' was nothing more than the appearance of a certain romantic fiction. The astonishing sentence is from the pen of the gentleman who reviews, in the *Athenæum*, the fiction of the year. This is the way in which we, or some of us, write now. It would have staggered Holofernes if he could have foreseen the modern style. Of old, if we admired a good novel, we would have said that it was a good novel. But now we say that it is a potent educational force. We speak as if it were electricity, or something of that kind, which had lain dormant for human purposes and was suddenly turned loose into a career of beneficence and sixpenny telegrams. The late M. Flaubert kept a *sottisier*, in which he wrote down the absurdities that he came across in his journey through life. I think he would have made a note of this wonderful piece of style, which is certainly (January 2) the funniest thing that the new year has brought us. Suppose that on the appearance of *Esmond*, or *Tom Jones*, somebody had spoken of the event as the liberation of a potent educational force! But novels were not regarded as educational forces in those happy old days,

when mortals wrote English, plain, good English, and a total absence of humour was not thought identical with 'Culture.'

\* \* \*

To persons destitute of culture (to whom I wish a Happy New Year) I venture to recommend a novel which, in one way, is an educational force. It is written in such amazingly bad English, or American, that it might be given to young writers 'to breathe themselves on' by correcting its solecisms. The author's taste is not much better than his grammar. But *My Official Wife*, by Colonel Savage (Routledge), contains a new and entertaining story. With all its obvious drawbacks, it will make a journey shorter, and is not easily laid down unfinished, unless one's taste and scholarship compel one to lay it down at first. The grammar is simply nowhere, but the interest never flags, and though you detest the characters, you are compelled to hurry on till you learn 'what became of them all.'

\* \* \*

A pretender died lately, Amélie de Bourbon, the eldest daughter of M. Naundorff, who said he was the Dauphin, Louis XVII. It is to be feared that the Dauphin was as certainly done to death by the scoundrels of the Revolution as Joan of Arc was burned by the English. However, Amélie de Bourbon believed in herself, and in her father, who probably was a believer in his own claims. Perkin Warbeck may also have been a sincere and earnest though deeply mistaken man. And there seems no reason to doubt that Mr. Thomas Allen, the father of John Sobieski and Charles Edward Stuart, also believed in himself. How he got the conviction that he, an English naval officer, son of Admiral Carter Allen, was the son of Charles Edward and the Princess Louisa of Stolberg, his wife, is an unfathomable psychological mystery. I have laboured at it, and was once almost persuaded to be among the faithful, when I found that the father of the Count of Albany *believed in himself*. That his offspring should believe in him was only natural. But some papers in Lord Braye's MSS. crush the pleasing delusion. In a document given by Charles Edward to the advocate Vulpian, Charles asserts 'that we have not, and never have had, any issue by the said Princess of Stolberg.' Again, on March 11, 1785, Charles declares

that 'he never had any other children' (except his daughter by Miss Walkinshaw), 'and in particular none by the Princess of Stolberg.' Now, even if Charles perjured himself, the Princess had a lively financial interest in claiming her child, if child she ever bore, but she made no such claim. When Charles legitimated his daughter, various suggestions for medals were sent in. One bore a ship, nearing the English coast and carrying a flag with the Stuart arms. The legend is, *Pendet salus spe exiguâ et extremâ*. She—the Duchess of Albany, not Thomas Allen—was 'the frail last hope' of the 'White Rose.' But the extraordinary resemblance of the two so-called Stuarts to the Royal Stuart family was universally recognised, and some unknown events may be the explanation of their mystery. They were men of really great accomplishments, and the description of a Highland funeral, in their *Tales of the Century*, is a piece of writing worthy of the greatest novelist. Some of their poems are also very spirited. But the Historical Manuscripts Commission (*Tenth Report, Appendix*, Part VI. pp. 230–238) settles the pretensions of the Iolair Dearg, the Red Eagle, Prince Charles's son. So perish our illusions!

\* \* \*

The following piece is by Mr. Murray, author of *The Scarlet Gown* (Holden, St. Andrews, 1890). The Baron de Bookworms, and many other critics, have welcomed this pleasant and pretty little volume. If you ask for it, and if the bookseller says it is 'out of print,' ask him to verify his facts. More and more do booksellers say that books are 'out of print' when the publishers' shelves are groaning with them. Probably the vendor is merely too lazy to send for the work which happens to be wanted. But the system works ill for authors. Often have I seen my own books advertised, at fancy prices, as 'first editions,' while a *second* edition is really the rarity, and absolutely *introuvable*, because it does not exist. The vendor asks fifteen shillings for a second-hand copy of what can be got, in rich abundance, new, at three-and-nine. The public ('if any') is choked off by the mendacious legend 'out of print,' and the amateur pays dear for his stupidity. When you ask for *The Scarlet Gown*, see that you get it. But this is a dull prelude to Mr. Murray's poem.

## AFTER WATERLOO.

On the field of Waterloo we made Napoleon rue  
 That ever out of Elba he decided for to come,  
 For we finished him that day, and he had to run away,  
 And yield himself a prisoner on the Billy-ruffum.

'Twas a stubborn fight, no doubt, and the fortune wheeled about,  
 And the brave Mossoos kept coming most uncomfortably near,  
 And says Wellington the hero, as his hopes went down to zero,  
 'I wish to God that Blücher or the night was only here!'

But Blücher came at length, and we broke Napoleon's strength ;  
 And the flower of his army—that's the wonderful Old Guard—  
 They made a final sally, but they found they could not rally,  
 And at last they broke and fled after fighting bitter hard.

Now Napoleon he had thought, when a British ship he sought,  
 And gave himself uncalled-for, in a manner you might say,  
 He'd be treated like a king, with the best of everything,  
 And maybe have a palace for to live in every day.

He was treated very well, as became a noble swell,  
 But we couldn't leave him loose, not in Europe anywhere,  
 For we knew he would be making some gigantic undertaking  
 While the trustful British Lion was reposing in his lair.

We tried him once before near the European shore,  
 Having planted him in Elba, where he promised to remain,  
 But when he saw his chance, why he bolted off to France,  
 And he made a lot of trouble—but it wouldn't do again.

Says King George to him, ' You know, far away you'll have to go,  
 To a pleasant little island off the coast of Africay,  
 Where they tell me that the view of the ocean, deep and blue,  
 Is remarkable extensive, and it's there you'll have to stay.'

So Napoleon wiped his eye, and he wished King George good-bye,  
 And being stony-broke made the best of it he could ;  
 And they built a pleasant dwelling on the island of St. Helen,  
 And Napoleon Buonaparty is provided for for good.

Now of that I don't complain, but I ask, and ask in vain,  
 Why me, a British soldier, as has lost a useful arm  
 Through fighting of the foe, when the trumpets cease to blow  
 Should be forced to feed the pigs on a little Surrey farm,

While him, as fought with us, and created such a fuss,  
 And in the whole of Europe did a mighty deal of harm,  
 Should be kept upon a rock, like a precious fighting cock,  
 And do no work whatever, which would suit me to a charm ?

R. F. MURRAY.

A. LANG.

*The 'Donna.'*

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